Minutes of the

Meeting of the Executive Committee

of the

World Council of Churches

18 - 21 February 2003

Meeting held at the

Ecumenical Institute Bossey, Switzerland

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World Council of Churches

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

held at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey

18-21 February 2003

1. OPENING ACTIONS

1.1 Worship

Morning worship took place in the Chapel of the Ecumenical Institute Bossey. Planned by a group of staff, worship was led on 18 - 21 February by Rev. Septemmy E. Lakawa, H. E. Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima, Bishop Dr Rolf Koppe and Rev. Dr Maake S. J. Masango.

1.2 Call to Order and Welcome

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I called the meeting to order at 9:00 hrs on Tuesday, 18 February 2003. After welcoming members to Bossey, he noted that this was a crucial period in the history of humanity where changes in technology, science and communication were taking place and where new tensions were emerging in different regions. At this time when Iraq has become the focus of global attention and the world is on the brink of war, civil society has clearly articulated its frustration and rejection of violence and war. Churches in different parts of the world, in obedience to the Gospel message, have reaffirmed their prophetic role by rejecting war and acting as agents of peace, justice and reconciliation.

The Moderator continued by saying that it is also a critical period for the World Council of Churches, which is facing great financial difficulties. The extended officers' meeting in 2002 tried to address these difficulties but the problem remains serious and may continue to be serious as the indicators on financial contributions from our churches are not positive. The General Secretary and Finance Committee will provide detailed information on the WCC financial situation and their own assessment of this situation. The Moderator emphasised that the churches must be challenged as to how the Council is manifesting in concrete and tangible ways its commitment to the ecumenical movement in general and to the WCC in particular.

He then proposed that before starting the actual business of the meeting voices from the regions be heard on issues facing the churches.

Dr Marion Best spoke from her situation in Canada, which is very closely tied economically, through the media and through friendship and family ties, to that of the USA. She said it had been very frustrating that the Canadian government had finally only two weeks earlier said it would not support a US unilateral action against Iraq. There had been peace marches in Canada, including churches, but the situation remained difficult.

Dean Anders Gadegaard informed the group that Denmark had decided to support the US and UK governments in its policy, thereby going against that of main countries in the European Union. Denmark currently has a right wing majority government and the opposition is very weak. For this reason the government has a free rein to do whatever it likes and is on very friendly terms with the US. Even though there is some debate on this issue, the government has wide support on many other issues. In this situation the churches are reluctant to take a stand when they feel that the population is not fully decided.

Mrs Carmencita Karagdag shared the concern of many in Asia about what is happening today, including the US declaration of war on terrorism. She said that the massive outpouring of protest against the war heartened people in Asia. Many are wondering how we in the ecumenical movement can tap into this broad anti-war movement and use it for the ecumenical agenda for peace with justice. In September she had convened an international conference on "terrorism in a globalised world". As a result, some proposals were made, and the Christian Conference of Asia was looking seriously into what we can do together. Naturally the war in Iraq was high on the agenda. There were calls for a series of sustained prayers and rallies as well as an international day of prayer on February 14. The national councils of churches in Asia responded as well and it is hoped that this will develop into something more powerful as the threat of war becomes stronger. She asked whether it was time for the ecumenical community to call for a movement to boycott America. Churches are part of the actions taken by civil society, but we should make the ecumenical movement's leadership more visible in these events.

Mrs Donnalie Edwards-Cabey spoke about the reticence in the Caribbean to speak out against the USA's policies towards Iraq for fear of economic reprisals. The governments have not spoken out as their economies are so closely linked with that of the US. The churches are against a war in Iraq and civil society as a whole is very

active. A groundswell of opposition is strengthening the churches to be more vocal against an impending war. A possible rise in oil prices is very threatening to the small economies in this region as they are not that stable. She also shared that last November when her church met, there were already discussions within the House of Bishops as to how Anglicans can best address this situation. At this meeting they also expressed their support for the WCC in its difficult financial situation and pledged to make a one-time contribution to help. She asked that the staff follow this up. At the end of her presentation she asked the Committee to hold the family of the dean of the cathedral in Antigua in their prayers as the dean had recently passed away.

Bishop Hilarion shared the deep concern in Russia about war in Iraq. The government does not support plans to launch such a war and the Russian Orthodox Church has expressed its disapproval of any unilateral military actions without support of the UN Security Council. There is a general uneasiness among the people and huge demonstrations against war are taking place in Russia. His church has called for a peaceful solution, while representatives of other religions in Russia, e.g. Islam, are also in solidarity with this position and share common views. He hoped that this Executive Committee meeting would come up with a strong statement and send a clear message to the world in order to try to prevent military action.

Bishop McKinley Young expressed his satisfaction at being in this fellowship and having the opportunity of this exchange. Regrettably the policies of the US government are different from the view of those who make up the ecumenical community in the US. He informed the group that some church leaders have taken advertising space in the media against the war and in most major cities there were protests as well. A special appeal was made to president and leadership to give the UN weapons inspectors the opportunity to complete their work and find a peaceful solution. Among the voices in the US are some that say there needs to be a change in the US' relationship with other countries, including a more balanced policy in the Middle East. There is a desire to push the war to improve the economy but this is not supported by the churches, he said.

The Moderator thanked members for their contributions and expressed his appreciation that the member churches had come together to express their clear rejection of the war. He said that at this time above all we need to deepen our togetherness, on all levels. The WCC had set up the Decade to Overcome Violence

(DOV) intentionally and now we realise its importance not just for the churches but for the whole world.

1.3 Roll Call

The General Secretary welcomed members of the Executive Committee and expressed appreciation that the Committee could meet again in Bossey, following the renovations. He then called the roll.

Apologies for absence had been received from Rev. Yadessa Daba, Rev. Inamar Correa De Souza, Rev. Fr. Dr Kondothra M. George, Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, Ms Jana Krajciriková, Prof. Dr Samuel Lee, Ms Abigail O. Ogunsanya and Rev. Dr Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere.

The following substitutes were approved: Mr John Doom for Rev. Dr Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere, Rev. Iteffa Gobena for Rev. Yadessa Daba who had resigned, and Father Mikhail Gundyaev for Bishop Dr Hilarion Alfeyev (on 21 February).

Dr Raiser then welcomed Dr William Temu, Director of Management, who had been appointed since the last meeting. The team co-ordinators had been invited to the first two plenary days of the meeting, in particular when the programme report is being presented. He then informed the Committee about the teams, the coordinators and their responsibilities:

Faith and Order	Rev. Dr Alan Falconer
Mission and Ecumenical Formation	Rev. Dr Carlos Ham
Justice, Peace, Creation	Ms Aruna Gnanadason
International Affairs, Peace & Human Security	Mr Peter Weiderud
Diakonia and Solidarity	Dr Elizabeth Ferris
Publications and Research	Mr Yannick Provost
Public Information	Ms Sara Speicher
Human Resources & Technical Services	Ms Christina Minezac
Finance	Ms Elaine Dykes
Budgeting and Planning	Mr Michiel Hardon
Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Director	Fr Dr Ioan Sauca

1.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland, 23-24 August 2002, were **approved** as circulated.

1.5 Adoption of Agenda and Timetable

The agenda of the meeting was **approved**.

2. REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Rather than speaking about the current world situation as the members had done, Dr Raiser mentioned that the WCC had responded to the initiative of the President of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, who had called together a group of church leaders and representatives from Europe, America and the Middle East on 5 February in Berlin. A declaration against military action in Iraq was adopted on that occasion, with the intention of opening it up for other churches to join. He hoped that this Executive Committee meeting would be an opportunity to widen the perspective on this initiative.

Dr Raiser said that since the Central Committee meeting five months earlier the WCC has passed through a period of transformation - facing a critical financial situation and the recommendations of the report of the Special Commission. With regard to the financial situation, a task group was set up of two CC members and two WCC Presidents to propose appropriate measures of response. Dr Raiser expressed his gratitude to Rev. Norman Shanks and Rev. Dr Gottfried Locher, the members of CC on the task group. He said that Dr Agnes Abuom and Bishop Eberhard Renz could not join the group but their input was included in the process. The task group's report and the work of SLG were submitted to the extended officers' meeting on 14-16 November 2002. In a letter of 21 November 2002 the Executive Committee members had received full information on the decisions taken by the officers. There was a substantial reduction on staff and programmes with the aim to establish a balanced budget for 2003 and hopefully produce a small surplus. He reminded the group that in the last two years there had been a massive reduction of staff, which had made an internal reorganisation and a concentration of programmes inevitable.

He referred to the "Green Book" which described the revised programme plans for 2003 and outlined the fifteen core programmes carried out by ten teams, the General Secretariat and Bossey. This structure eliminates one level of hierarchy and strengthens the role of the team coordinator. The former directors of Communication and Finance, Service &Administration finished their services to the WCC at the end of 2002, and continue for a while as special consultants focusing on particular tasks in agreement with the General Secretary. The Executive Committee expressed appreciation for their work and leadership in the past years.

Dr Raiser described the current Staff Leadership Group (SLG) which includes the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, Mr Georges Lemopoulos, the

Executive Secretary in the General Secretariat, Rev. Sabine Udodesku; as well as the Directors: Ms Geneviève Jacques for Programme, Dr William Temu for Management, and Rev. Dr Sam Kobia as Director and Special Representative of the General Secretary for Africa, with additional responsibility for Inter-Religious Relations and Dialogue and for the Decade to Overcome Violence. The Staff Executive Group had also been re-established and was composed of the members of SLG, the ten team coordinators and the Director of Bossey.

With regard to the financial issues Dr Raiser informed the Executive Committee that in spite of intensive efforts to stabilise the financial situation of WCC, news continues to arrive from partners that contributions are still being reduced further. The WCC thus remained in a precarious situation. He felt that no foundation would help WCC to maintain its essential core function but that support from this sector would only come for particular projects. We are in a situation where the member churches claim that WCC is their council and feel that it is the churches that must make the decisions, but they still do not contribute accordingly. He described this as a "moment of truth" for the WCC. The Harare Assembly decided to make member church contributions obligatory and established a minimum level of contribution at CHF 1,000 p.a. It was also decided at that time that a process should be started to bring the total contributions of member churches to CHF 10 million by 2005. This figure reflects the operational core of WCC and represents 25% of the total WCC budget. Dr Raiser reported that in spite of intensive efforts, the number of non-paying member churches has only slightly decreased. In 2003 the total income from member churches is less than it was in 1998 at the time of Harare. With the encouragement of the Officers a framework has been worked out for assessing the level of mandatory contributions by member churches in a manner which would produce a total of CHF 10 million. One of the immediate consequences would be that member churches contributed for a number of years would be considered inactive members and would therefore lose their right to have a seat at the assembly.

Dr Raiser said that since the last Central Committee where the Report of the Special Commission was presented, the resignation of Bishop Dr Margot Kaessman has given rise to much discussion in many parts of the ecumenical family. The discussions have clearly shown that we cannot take for granted the vision of the CUV document by our member churches.

Dr Raiser highlighted the need for deliberate communication, which is vital for the spirit of CUV. The WCC must listen to the response of the member churches to the

report of the Special Commission and take into account their views. This implies that the report should be made available in a way that is accessible to all. The focus of the January issue of the *Ecumenical Review* is on the Special Commission and the report is now available in Russian and in Greek to further discussion in Orthodox constituencies. Ways have to be found to promote further work by Faith&Order and by the WCC as a whole on the fundamental ecclesiological issues. Dr Raiser looked forward to the seminar to take place in Thessaloniki to be followed by a meeting of the Steering Committee.

Dr Raiser highlighted some of the items that would be dealt with in the programme report. The first was related to the meeting of the General Secretaries of the Regional Ecumenical Organisations with ecumenical partner agencies in December 2002. The discussions included ways of cooperation and the respective roles in a new ecumenical architecture. Some of the partners would like to establish a Global Alliance of partner agencies and this would have far-reaching consequences for the ecumenical family and for WCC in particular. Further discussions are underway with Christian World Communions and will hopefully lead to a more developed outline for a new ecumenical architecture, to be presented to Central Committee in August.

The second item is the Ninth General Assembly to be held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2006. During the World Social Forum, WCC staff made first contacts with the local hosts. A visit is planned by the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary in May 2003. The core group of the assembly planning committee will meet directly after this Executive Committee meeting, and guidance will be requested on some issues relating to that group and the proposals to be brought to the CC meeting in August 2003.

Dr Raiser regretted that he was unable to make any church visits in the last part of 2002 because of the internal changes that were taking place at the WCC. He reported that the Asian visit, postponed from November 2002, was planned shortly after the Executive Committee meeting. He committed this visit to the prayerful concern of Committee members. In addition to the May trip to Brazil, he would plan a visit to Angola in October; he will also be visiting the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church leadership.

In the discussion that followed the General Secretary's presentation, a number of comments were made and questions raised:

Metropolitan Gennadios, as one of the Faith&Oreder Officers, explained that F&O has a very tight agenda up to the Plenary Commission meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The work done on redrafting "The Nature and Purpose of the Church" with the responses received from the churches is extensive and has its own dynamic. In the F&O officers' meeting last January, it was agreed that the drafting committee take the recommendations of the Special Commission seriously with a view towards the document for the next assembly. The work being done on ecclesiology will be presented to the Special Commission as well.

Dr Raiser added that at this stage there is little in the ongoing work of the WCC that is visible as a serious response to the issues raised in the Special Commission report with regard to ecclesiology. If ecclesiology undergirds everything the Special Commission has done, then having received this report and having adopted the recommendations, the WCC must find ways of showing its seriousness in working on this.

Several members said that although their churches had received the report for reflection, the churches were not generally aware that they were expected to make specific responses to the WCC. The Moderator added that the Orthodox Churches needed to be encouraged to respond more intentionally. Metropolitan Gennadios proposed that the Orthodox members of both the CC and the Special Commission be asked to monitor their churches and ensure that responses are made before the next Central Committee.

3. PRESENTATION ON FINANCES

3.1 Budget 2003

Dr William Temu went briefly through the items on finance and the budget for 2003. Several concerns were raised during the discussion that followed:

The General Secretary expressed appreciation for the work done by the colleagues in finance. It was noted that the closing of the previous year was accomplished four weeks ahead of the auditors and that the financial instruments are working well.

The current position of the pension fund is under pressure given the harsh reality of such funds in Switzerland. For reasons of International Accounting Standards it is necessary for the WCC to reach an understanding with the pension fund where there is an accepted contribution rate for a period of ten years. The actuarial reports

arriving now indicate that the pension fund will claim a higher rate than is indicated in the 2003 budget (13%).

Bishop Koppe noted that there is increasing concern about the imbalance of the contributions from Germany where questions are being posed about the Orthodox churches and what they are contributing. He added that the German Churches would have to decrease contributions to the WCC due to lack of income.

Bishop Alfeyev said that the new schemes being proposed for membership contributions should be reviewed with regard to the way each church functions in its context. When the WCC proposes a scale related to membership, the property owned by churches, salaries of church workers as well as whether some churches receive church tax should be taken into account. He gave the example of the Russian Orthodox Church where, although it is possible to raise funds for specific projects, there is no stable income. He felt that negotiations between the WCC and individual churches on how to implement new guidelines should be undertaken.

Mr Hardon told the Committee that 15% of WCC income is from membership contributions. After Harare a campaign was started to get in touch with the member churches on membership contributions, but there was little response to initial efforts. It was then decided and reconfirmed at the Executive Committee in Nyborg in 2002 to relate subsidies to membership income. This approach has been more successful. The first objective for the campaign was to reach CHF 10 million but so far the WCC is not much closer to this goal. However, the second objective was to get 100% of member churches to contribute and in 2002 there was a rise from 50% to 66% of member churches paying membership dues. Bishop Zacharias added that the WCC had not insisted that all churches contribute, in the same way and that even the CHF 1000 is negotiable. He did stress, however, the need for all churches to contribute something. Others added the value of in-kind contributions such as the hosting of meetings, consultations and delegations. All members of the Executive Committee reiterated the need for the member churches to own the WCC in a tangible way.

3.2 Human Resources/Staffing/Contracts

Dr Raiser explained that the item on human resources and staff contracts was a composite one, including the effects of the reorganisation and reduction on staff budget in terms of persons and figures. Ms Christina Minezac introduced the document on the core-staffing budget.

Mr Lemopoulos briefly introduced the document on staff regulations. He reported that the task of revising the regulations was complete and that it was now being returned to the Executive Committee. While the process of revision was being undertaken a new structure was put into place which is not reflected in the new version. For this reason the regulations will be reviewed once more to reflect the new structure. He added that there is a need for a more deliberate, systematic and more focused staff development and this will be one of the major areas for investment of time and energy in future. This will include ecumenical formation, managerial skills and technical matters (e.g. planning, monitoring and evaluation and information technology). He also drew the attention of the Executive Committee to the section on decentralised staff. This way of working will be part of the new WCC profile.

Dr Temu introduced the document on "Functioning of new Teams since November 2002 Reorganisation". He said that the staff are "living into the new structure" although the final outcome is not fully known. He highlighted the newer elements of the structure, the Team Coordinator as middle management, new decentralised offices and the role of the Staff Executive Group (SEG). He concluded by saying that the WCC may have to fine-tune the structure in light of the experience gained in working in this way.

In the discussion that followed members mentioned several concerns:

With regard to staff morale Mr Lemopoulos said that the most difficult part was explaining to colleagues that, after many years of loyal service, they would have to leave the staff of the Council. There was an element of uncertainty at not knowing what would happen next. The Moderator remarked that during this difficult period the pastoral care given by the General Secretary to colleagues was significant and deserves the Committee's appreciation. He also expressed his own appreciation that in a very short period of time staff were able to work with a renewed sense of responsibility and commitment. Dr Raiser added that this process could not have run as smoothly as it had without the help of the Staff Representative Group. Dr Ham identified three ways in which staff morale had been built up, i.e. through office relocation and physically working together, through the development of staff spirituality by beginning meetings with prayers and/or Bible readings, and especially by the solidarity received from outside the WCC where partners, friends, commissioners, CC members and others in church leadership have written to staff.

Mrs Karagdag asked whether, given this radical reorganisation with streamlining and cutbacks there was confidence that WCC has the capacity to lead in ecumenical commitment and move forward. Dr Best responded that there is still no confidence that further cuts might not be needed, and that this makes it difficult for staff to function at their most creative level. She added that what is hopeful in this report is that someone is monitoring what is going on at staff level. She felt that discussion on the WCC vision was still needed. She also commended the staff and leadership for being able to continue to work in the midst of this difficult situation. Dr Raiser felt that the exercise had been a test case for an understanding of structure and that it must never become an end in itself. He saw the need to refrain from putting too much ideological significance on a structure but rather continually to adjust the working structures as the work requires.

With regard to the WCC vision itself, Dr Raiser stated that this had not changed and, even though we have reduced human and material resources, it still has the capacity to respond to the central challenges. Nevertheless the WCC cannot do all that the churches want it to do.

4. PROGRAMME REPORT

Ms Geneviève Jacques presented the programme report, noting that the first part was a summary of concrete actions taken since the last Central Committee. The second part of the report is dedicated to the key issues and challenges where guidance is needed from the Executive Committee. She highlighted some of the areas the Committee would be asked to discuss. Dr Sam Kobia then reported on the offices, whose work cuts across the WCC as a whole, some of which is not programmatic in the classic sense.

4.1 Ecumenical Institute Bossey

Dr Ioan Sauca, Director of Bossey, was invited to give a short report. He said that the Executive Committee was the first group to experience the renovations to the building. In an effort to become self-supporting, Bossey had opened its doors not only to churches and the WCC, but also to other organisations. The current theme for the graduate school was "Mission and Healing in a broken and suffering World" and he hoped this would provide a contribution to the CWME conference. He added that there are more than 100 applications for the next graduate school, and that from 2004 there will be a PhD programme in Bossey in cooperation with the University of Geneva.

Fr Sauca reported on the continuing process of creating the Ecumenical Research Centre, a consolidation and augmentation of the WCC library and archives in Geneva and the newly enlarged library facilities of Bossey. The initial costs of the project had been funded by a generous grant of 3.7 Mio CHF from the Geneva Banque Pictet.

4.2 Decentralisation

Guidance was requested from the Executive Committee with regard to the relocation of the Middle East and Pacific regional desks as well as the Indigenous Peoples' Programme to Latin America. Ms Jacques also mentioned that a review of all decentralised capacities would be made in order to establish a house-wide policy.

In the discussion about the decentralisation of regional desks the following statements were made:
It is very important to avoid being misunderstood when dealing with churches in a specific region. In the case of the Pacific, Mr Doom said that a personal visit from WCC staff would be necessary to avoid misunderstandings in future. This was repeated by those from the Middle East with regard to that region.

Questions were raised as to the choice of regions. The need for clear guidelines for a consistent policy on decentralised offices was seen as essential. Some clarification is needed as to the practical relationship of staff in the decentralised offices with WCC staff in Geneva. The relationships with the REOs are particularly important in this decentralising process.

Ms Jacques said that because the realities of life of churches in regions vary, the regional responses to the move towards decentralisation would also differ. The programmatic work on diakonia and the accompaniment of churches is the focus of the work in the regions, but other programmes in the WCC also have a regional context. The issue at the heart of this concern is the question of coherence, which is made more visible with the decentralisation of offices. She saw decentralised capacity as a new way of implementing the mandate of the WCC and for this reason the review of the current decentralised capacities is being undertaken.

Dr Raiser said that this process was part of rethinking the ecumenical architecture; it directly affects the WCC regional desks, but the WCC will also need to rethink the logic of its operations on different levels.

4.3 Commissions

Ms Jacques explained that the issue of creating two new commissions, on Diakonia and Solidarity, and on Justice, Peace and Creation, was being brought to the Executive Committee at this point, in the case of D&S because of current discussions with funding partners on the Global Alliance, and in the case of JPC because of the need to streamline and integrate the advisory groups on JPC, women and youth. Nevertheless it would be important to avoid recreating the former unit way of working so that staff can work within a common whole. The advice of the Committee was being sought on the creation of these commissions.

Dean Gadegaard said that rationalising the groups as well as involving the partner agencies more seriously in the commissions would be helpful. He hoped that in the discussions on this the WCC would succeed in integrating the wishes of the agencies into this new commission structure so that an alliance among partners will have the face of the WCC.

Archbishop Nifon said that founding a commission on Diakonia and Solidarity would be a strong step in the right direction. He reminded the group of the experiences of the churches in Eastern Europe, including his own country, Romania. He regretted that the consultation in El Escorial (1987) which underlined ecumenical discipline in resource sharing, had lost its momentum among the growing bilateral actions by partners.

Dr Kobia drew the Committee's attention to the section of the programme report on the cooperation between IRRD, DOV and the MEF team in the form of a consultation on religious plurality. This was in response to a Central Committee decision. He also pointed to the document on the 2003 theme for the DOV, "Sudan - Healing and Reconciliation", proposing that the matter be referred to the programme sub-committee. The Committee asked that the 2004 theme for DOV be presented at the next Executive Committee meeting later in 2003.

5. SPECIAL COMMISSION ON ORTHODOX PARTICIPATION IN THE WCC

Mr van Beek reviewed the recommendations made by the Central Committee on questions of membership and indicated that follow-up will differ according to the nature of the recommendations. Concerning recommendations to the Executive Committee, the General Secretary noted that these are technical matters and the

programme sub-committee will give the appropriate response. Mr van Beek said the recommendations would be shared with the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration (the Steering Committee) when it meets in early June 2003.

Dr Raiser presented the progress report on Consensus Decision-making. He drew attention to his analysis of the current Rules of Debate, which indicate the very limited character of decisions taken by governing bodies of the WCC. The only decisions with real validity are those about the internal life of the WCC; all others are suggestions or recommendations to member churches, which have no binding value. What emerges clearly, he noted, is the need to strengthen instruments which draw a maximum of benefit from the deliberation processes of the WCC.

Concerning Next Steps, the General Secretary cautioned against using new procedures already at the next Central Committee meeting. The process requires time to mature, he said.

Archbishop Nifon signalled the positive reactions to the work done by the Special Commission but noted that many are unaware of the details. He reminded the group of how the Special Commission came into being after the Declaration of Thessaloniki and that the aim was to avoid frustration for certain groups who always felt in the minority. The Special Commission had been particularly impressed by the experience described by Dr D'Arcy Wood of Australia that the way to consensus was to identify what unites us rather than what divides us. Bishop Koppe agreed that it was not easy to explain the process. Much depended on the starting point: in Germany there were many questions about what it implied, whether it was in fact a way of avoiding difficult issues? He underlined the need to restore the level of trust.

Dr Best noted that experience of the aboriginal community in Canada had demonstrated the importance of making space for the quiet and minority voices, and that small groups were often the best means of making sure these were heard. She agreed that trust had to be re-built.

Dean Gadegaard underlined that the proposal allowed a new direction for discussion and a means of taking minorities into account. If consensus were not reached, then voting would be the last resort.

Dr Kirkpatrick agreed that we were already in a process of consensus, but coming from a culture where the Roberts Rules of Order were applied, he felt it was

important that procedures be seen to be transparent and that care be taken to avoid an impression of manipulation or favouritism. He asked therefore that minimum rules and procedures be spelled out to build trust in the new system and avoid misunderstandings.

Justice Adinyira also underlined the need for clear rules and procedures. She noted that at WCC meetings decisions made in small groups were not always taken on board, and that for the sake of consensus the views expressed in small groups must be reflected in the reports. She also noted the question of the amount of time required hearing all views, necessary in a consensus system.

The Moderator remarked that in his reading of the history of the Special Commission, Orthodox frustrations were less with rules and procedures than about setting the agenda and programmes of the WCC together. This was the significance of consensus.

The General Secretary made a distinction between setting an agenda for the work of the WCC as a whole or for a meeting. He agreed it would be useful to have an open space to discuss a burning issue where a decision is not pre-judged, but he noted that part of the calling of the WCC was to face up to controversial issues and open dialogue. With reference to Justice Adinyira's comments about small groups, he cited the example of the Church of Aotearoa-New Zealand, which uses the method of small groups to discuss important agenda items, respond to clear questions, and come to consensus. The Uniting Church in Australia uses a different method. This shows that it is interesting to look at different models.

The Moderator invited the deputy General Secretary, Mr Lemopoulos, to report on the Permanent Committee. Mr Lemopoulos reported that the staff group following-up the work of the Special Commission had held its first meeting and reflected on the debate in Germany, and learnings from beyond the German context. The strong reactions demonstrated that there are people for whom the WCC is important, people who care, are committed and want to participate in the WCC. The group also looked at debates taking place at different levels: church leadership, theologians, people's groups and movements.

He informed the committee that three seminars are planned, one in the context of the meeting of the Steering Committee in Thessaloniki, one with Orthodox and Protestants from Africa to promote dialogue and reflection in a different context, and one reflecting on a chapter from the Special Commission on Social and Ethical

Matters, using a document of the Russian Orthodox Church on social teaching in the church, as a way of learning from one another.

Bishop Koppe drew attention to the fear expressed by some that the permanent committee will become a body of control, and noted it is not easy to start a series of meetings in an atmosphere of mistrust. The problem is how to start work with the Permanent committee and to ensure transparency.

In response to a request for clarity concerning the Permanent Committee and the Steering Committee, the General Secretary explained that the Central Committee decided that until the next Assembly the steering committee should fulfil the role of permanent committee. Part of its task is to work out its role in the future and its composition. The continuation committee will have to define the role of the permanent committee after the Assembly. Nothing is decided as yet but it should be an advisory body, not a new level of governance, and the group will need to describe its interaction with the governing bodies.

Archbishop Nifon encouraged the group not to give up its determination to find creative solutions between the most radical positions.

6. SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Moderator of the Search Committee, Dr Masango, said that the first meeting of the Committee would take place in April. There was little to report so far; the Search Committee had met after Central Committee to plan the agenda and timelines: the deadline for nominations was the end of January, and for applications 28 February. The members of the Search Committee present would meet later in the day.

In view of the limited time for the process between now and the next meeting of the Central Committee, the Moderator was concerned that this was the only opportunity for the Executive Committee to be informed and to give guidance.

Dr Masango said the committee plans to meet three times between February and August - in April to look at applications; and then twice to screen and finalise the selection of candidates for interview. If possible the Search Committee would propose one name to the Central Committee; otherwise two.

The General Secretary, in response to a question from Archbishop Karim on the role of the Executive Committee, explained that the Search Committee was in fact a sub-committee of the Central Committee. The Executive Committee can give advice but has no direct authority in the search process. A precedent has been set in previous elections in proposing one name where the candidate has been chosen by at least a two-thirds majority of the Search Committee, but there are no hard and fast rules on this; if there is no majority, the Central Committee must decide.

Dean Gadegaard noted that there are clear written procedures for the Search Committee to follow. At its first meeting it defined the profile of the candidate; in April it hopes to identify candidates for interview in June. There is the possibility of meeting again just before Central Committee if necessary.

Concerning the composition of the Search Committee, the only region not represented is the Pacific. Dr Masango said the committee regretted this; it had been agreed that, should a member of the committee withdraw, a replacement would be chosen from the Pacific region.

7. REPORT ON RELATIONSHIPS

Mr van Beek presented the report on "Relations with Constituencies". He drew attention to the fact that the report covers the period since the Executive Committee meeting in February 2002. The Executive Committee had expressed the wish that in each report, a particular aspect of relations be highlighted. In this report, the focus was on Regional Ecumenical Organisations (REOs). The report did not cover every detail but highlighted a number of things, for example, assistance to AACC in the transition period, and investigation with CCA on how to maximise coordination of the CCA assembly in 2005 and the WCC assembly in 2006. Mr van Beek drew the attention of the Executive Committee particularly to the first multi-lateral meeting in December 2003 between senior staff of the REOs, Ecumenical Agencies and the WCC. In the context of diminishing resources for all it was felt most helpful to look to the future together and identify roles and relations at different levels as a basis for further discussion. The remainder of the document listed visits to and meetings with the constituency, which gave a sense of the extent and variety of relationships.

Mrs Karagdag drew attention to the recommendation from CCA for the governing bodies of WCC/CCA to be invited to each other's meetings. Mr van Beek responded that this could only be done within our financial possibilities.

Bishop Koppe enquired whether there been contacts with the Vatican on the Iraq conflict? The General Secretary said there had not been contacts on this issue. He reminded the Executive Committee that the WCC's experience of trying to act in consort with the Vatican on matters of political concern had proved to be difficult.

The Moderator underlined that tensions have always existed between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC and many of its member churches. It is a fact of ecumenical life, but in spite of our differences, he believed our ecumenical work with the Roman Catholic Church was essential. He proposed that the Executive Committee re-emphasise the vital importance of this relationship for the future. Regarding REOs, the Moderator noted that most are in crisis though the nature of the difficulties might vary. He welcomed the fact that the General Secretary had addressed this issue and that it would be possible to assist REOs to restructure and re-evaluate their ecumenical mandate in their region. For REOs' relationships with the Roman Catholic Church there were possibilities of collaboration on the regional and country levels. He was keen not to lose sight of the project of the Ecumenical Forum.

Mr van Beek responded that there was growing interest. He cited the meeting held last year in the US where about half the participants were from evangelical and Pentecostal constituencies. Though the meeting did not produce substantial documents, it had nevertheless been encouraging and had served as a platform for mutual discovery, and it was clear the process should continue. It is hoped that the Forum will try to look at the longer process over the next five to six years. Future meetings would focus on issues common to all. It was hoped to be able to organise meetings with more visibility and with the participation of high profile leaders.

Metropolitan Gennadios expressed disappointment at how our Catholic brothers had been unable to respond to our concerns in the JWG. To continue, he said, we needed to be able to communicate with mutual respect and transparency. Bishop Koppe felt that we needed to make more efforts to contact the Vatican. We cannot leave it just to the LWF and others and not continue to discuss Faith and Order questions, he said. On the political level, it is absolutely essential to have strong links. We need to find ways to overcome this problem. Dr Kirkpatrick felt this was a serious matter, and queried the possibility of using other channels to put issues on

the table. The US Catholic Conference, for example, had done some good work on the issue of rushing to war. Concerning the Forum, he noted a useful offshoot of last year's meeting: a gathering at Fuller Theological Seminary which resulted in setting up "Christian Churches Together" in the US including Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Roman Catholics. This grouping will not replace the NCCCUSA but will provide a forum to meet and a way for the Holy Spirit to move. He was grateful for this, and hoped to see similar developments elsewhere.

In response to Bishop Koppe, the General Secretary acknowledged the sense of urgency which was shared by the officers and staff leadership, but the WCC had had to acknowledge constantly that relations with the Roman Catholic Church on regional and national level, which we must make every effort to strengthen, were very different to those on the level of the Vatican. The General Secretary's personal experience over three decades was not encouraging on the world level. Of course, he said, with Faith and Order we struggle forward on theological work and cooperation in the field of mission, and maintain links in the field of inter-religious relations and dialogue with the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity. He assured the Executive Committee that there was no intention of withdrawing from relations with the Catholic Church, but it was necessary to recognise the limitations.

Bishop Hilarion reminded the group that relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Vatican had been very negative and frustrating. In dialogue with the Pontifical Council positive things had been said but nothing had been done to correct, for example, the situation in West Ukraine, where the policy of the Roman Catholic Church went contrary to what had been agreed in talks. Now the RCC has developed plans to foster its own presence in what the ROC regards as its own canonical territory. The ROC saw this as a crusade against the Orthodox Church.

It was recommended that the Document - Relations with Constituencies - be referred to the Programme Sub-Committee. The item on Applications for Membership was referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee.

8. ASSEMBLY PREPARATIONS

Mr Lemopoulos presented the document "Planning the 9th Assembly of the WCC". The most important point on the agenda of the Assembly Planning Core Group was to define the process ahead, what decisions should be taken, when and by whom, in preparation for the Assembly in early 2006. Proposals for the theme would be put

before the Central Committee. Executive Committee input was welcomed and would be shared with the Assembly Planning Committee (APC). The most important items on which their input was needed were an indication of the number of days and confirmation of the preferred dates within the bracket already indicated, and a recommendation on the number of delegates. The Executive Committee had already given a signal that the Assembly should be smaller with a maximum of 600-800 delegates. This number should now be confirmed in order to proceed with seat allocations.

Mr Jean-Nicolas Bazin presented the document on "WCC 9th Assembly 2006 Seat Allocation". The allocation of seats to member churches should reflect the realities of WCC membership (size, regions, confessions, membership in several countries, etc). The document included proposed guidelines and models. He explained each model and drew attention to the explanatory notes, the proposed guidelines, practical considerations and questions to help the Executive Committee choose the tool which best serves the organisation.

Dr Best noted the hard work involved in producing the different models, and said they would be very helpful. It was agreed that the document "Planning the 9th Assembly of the WCC" be referred to the Programme Sub-Committee and the document on seat allocation to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee.

In the discussion that ensued, Dean Gadegaard felt that from the financial point of view, the Committee should look at the cheaper models, i.e. those with a lower number of participants. There was still unclarity on contributions and budget, and we must be aware of this when indicating preferences.

The General Secretary pointed out that fact that there is only one more Central Committee meeting between the full meeting of the APC and the Assembly. This means that the APC will have to do much of its work without reference to Central Committee. It may therefore be necessary to enable more interaction between the APC and the Executive Committee than has been the case in the past, to allow overall direction from the governing bodies. The General Secretary underlined the plea from the deputy General Secretary that, as far as possible, the Executive Committee agree at this meeting on timing and preferred dates. This is important for the local preparations and also to give guidance to the APC so they can bring clear proposals for action to Central Committee. To get an idea of the total number of participants, the number of delegates (e.g. 700-750) should by previous

experience be multiplied by five, which would imply a total body of 3500 people. Regarding contributions, member churches are requested in advance to plan on a contribution equivalent to one year of annual contributions. We would therefore hope to have approximately CHF 6.5 million. It would also be helpful if the Finance sub-committee were to give basic directions/guidelines concerning the budget and authorise staff to go ahead.

Archbishop Nifon referred to the criteria for the assembly theme. He encouraged the Programme sub-committee to consider the Trinitarian theology of communion; he felt it was time for such a theological and ecumenical approach, which would be interesting and exciting.

Dr Best asked what arrangements had been made with other world communions on ways of sharing resources, for example, study materials. Mr Lemopoulos pointed out that WCC, WARC and LWF had established the practice of inviting a member of each constituency to the assembly planning committee of the other bodies. The time has not yet come to hold common assemblies, but they are actively looking at ways to cooperate, such as with Bible studies.

The Moderator shared his reflection on the theme, which he believed should emerge from the realities of life and be responsive to those realities. We need a dynamic theme, which should address issues and have a message for the world. In reviewing past themes he suggested that at this point in history, it should be missiological, keeping in mind that mission is an essential part of the vocation of the church.

9. PUBLIC ISSUES

Mr Peter Weiderud gave a detailed presentation regarding the background of the proposed statement on Iraq, reminding the group of the recent global protest for peace, the political context in the USA, Europe and the UN, the consistent language and sharp analysis of WCC member churches, the prophetic critique of the churches, the crimes and human rights abuses of Saddam Hussein, the importance of the UN Security Council resolutions and how to get Iraq to comply with them, the inspections, the consequences of war, the difficulties in the region including ending the illegal occupation of Palestine, and the establishment of a nuclear free zone in the Middle East. The proposed statement on Iraq endeavoured to address these dilemmas.

The other two proposals were for Minutes on the situations in Cyprus and in Sri Lanka. Again, Mr Weiderud reminded the committee of the background of these two situations. He concluded by saying that peace is more than the avoidance of war, it implies justice and human rights and the will of the people.

Mrs Karagdag thanked Mr Weiderud for the comprehensive coverage on Asia, but noted there was no mention of the Philippines. She reminded the Committee of the situation there, of the US presence and infrastructures for the US to wage war on terrorism in SE Asia, and the subservient regime in the Philippines. She noted also the situation of the churches in the Philippines, which endeavour to work in cooperation with the WCC and CCA, and felt this merited coverage.
Her second comment referred to the statement on Iraq, which in her view lacked a sense of urgency. She felt the statement should be stronger and convey a sense of opposition to the war; it should say not only what the churches are doing but also encourage churches to participate in mass actions and be part of an anti-war coalition. Dr Masango concurred and suggested the statement should also ask who inspects Israel and the USA. Justice Adinyira mentioned the need to watch also the situation in West Africa.

Mr Weiderud thanked members for their comments. With reference to West Africa, International Affairs, with AACC, were looking into what could be done there; it is too early to say what action would be taken. With reference to the Philippines Mr Clement John said that a major conference with WCC, CCA and NCC of the Philippines took place with a large number of churches from the region and partners, looking specifically at the war on terror. It was recorded in the activities report, but not listed in this document.

Mr Weiderud read out the draft statement on Iraq and invited comments and reactions. Dr Best said that although she appreciated the mention of Canada, this was no longer relevant as the government had taken a firm stance. Several members including Bishop Hilarion felt there should be a strong appeal to political leaders not to act without the direct authorisation of the UN Security Council.

Dr Kirkpatrick underlined the distress and deep conflict affecting the churches in the US. Never had there been such unanimity of the churches in opposition to war, apart from the Southern Baptists. As it was unclear was how much this was impacting the members of the churches, he felt that the statement was important for congregations. He pinpointed several issues that should be strongly stated in the text: the Executive Committee opposes violence in Iraq; the humanitarian

consequences for Christians in the Middle East should be stressed; there should be no unilateral action; concern should be expressed about undermining the UN; the serious threat for the future should be emphasised. He appreciated that the Berlin statement be lifted up and wondered whether others, such as that of the NCCCUSA, should be mentioned too. Referring to specific actions, he suggested there be a call to individuals to prayer and as well as a call for a global prayer for peace. Churches praying together all over the world could be helpful, and the WCC could play a role in a truly global faith effort with the Roman Catholic Church and with Islamic communities. The question was whether there was any possibility of getting the leadership of the world religious communities to do that.

Bishop Koppe, recalling the previous discussion of the draft, repeated the suggestion that the government of Iraq be mentioned earlier in the statement, to make it clearer to whom the statement is addressed.

The Moderator urged that the statement articulate clearly the urgency of the situation using tougher, sharper language. Was it necessary to have such a long statement? It should be brief, clear, tough and to the point. He agreed with Dr Kirkpatrick, but to refer to statements made by specific churches could create more sensitivities. Other regions are covered in the Berlin statement. He proposed, therefore, to maintain the reference to the Berlin statement only, mentioning the WCC and the participation of churches from Europe, the US and the Middle East. He agreed with the suggestion to make reference to the interfaith dimension.

Mrs Karagdag reiterated the need for care to be taken in the formulation of the statement. She was concerned that it not give the impression that we are open to support war if the UN supports it. Regarding Dr Kirkpatrick's suggestion of a prayer vigil, she referred to a meeting held in Hong Kong with representatives from the WCC, CCA and churches in Asia including the NCC in the Philippines which strongly recommended that the WCC take the lead in an international day of prayer to make visible the unity of the churches vis-à-vis the situation in Iraq, and propose global coordination of a boycott of American products.

Rev. Gobena was concerned that there be no polarisation between Christians and Muslims, and recommended a call to other religious communities to participate in prayer; he suggested organising a joint meeting where the religious communities would face the problem together, especially with Muslims, and speak with a common voice.

It was agreed that the Public Issues Sub-Committee review the statement and make changes in the light of the discussion.

Regarding the possibility of an interfaith meeting, Dr Raiser said there had been no specific initiative from the WCC. He reminded the Executive Committee of the high-level Christian-Muslim dialogue meeting held at the Ecumenical Centre in October 2002, co-chaired by His Holiness Aram I, and noted the broad area of agreement among religious leaders regarding this war. They had not tried to reach a common statement. He pointed out that a political thrust would change the dynamic and would require a high investment of time and energy. He cited examples of those trying to organise inter-religious meetings, for example, the World Conference on Religion and Peace, and suggested it would be best to leave it in the hands of those for whom it is a primary concern. He felt it was important to get a strong voice from the Christian church, which might be heard by those governments who claim to be inspired by Christian values. He saw the potential of sharpening this common voice and appealing to Christian conscience through the depth of the spiritual language of community. He felt this was missing in the statement.

Dr Kirkpatrick referred to the meeting of church leaders in which he participated, with British Prime Minister Tony Blair. It was a significant meeting, he said; a pastoral visit of Christians approaching another Christian. The delegation spoke of their moral values and explained why the idea of a pre-emptive strike went against these values; they hoped that Britain would raise these serious concerns with the US leadership and encouraged the Prime Minister to take leadership in this. Dr Kirkpatrick would wish for a similar conversation with the leaders of his own country.

Mr Weiderud introduced the draft Minutes on Cyprus and Sri Lanka. The Moderator asked if the Minute endorsed the "Annan Plan" in Cyprus. Ms Salpy Eskidjian, staff member of International Affairs, pointed out that the statement endorsed the efforts of the UN Secretary General, not the plan itself; rather it served as a basis for negotiation. This position was put forward after consultation with the Church of Cyprus, urging that both sides sign the agreement as an acceptance of peaceful negotiations.

The Moderator was concerned that the wording could imply implicit agreement with the plan when the churches of Cyprus and Greece, as well as a part of Greek civil society, have great reservations about it. Ms Eskidjian affirmed that there had

been intense discussions with the Church of Cyprus about this, they did not oppose it but had forwarded their reservations to Mr Kofi Annan.

Archbishop Karim agreed that the Minute should not give the impression that we are affirming the plan and suggested the wording be changed to indicate that, while not passing judgement on the plan, we affirm the negotiations.

Mr Clement John then introduced the Minute on Sri Lanka. He noted that while the Executive Committee was meeting in Bossey, a delegation of the National Council of Churches of Sri Lanka was visiting Norway.

10. EVALUATION OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2002

Mr Lemopoulos presented the "Evaluation of the Central Committee 2002" by the participants, which was the result of more than 50 responses. The participants highlighted the use of new tools and methodologies. Mr Lemopoulos noted with appreciation the role of colleagues from Communication, which had been very important in this connection. He noted the need to give a clear profile to Padare sessions, to avoid unnecessary tensions. He drew attention to the strong recommendation to reduce costs of the next Central Committee meeting. With the negotiation of a good reduction from the hotel, both costs and the location of participants under the same roof had been resolved. He pointed to the comments about the spiritual life of the Central Committee, and the concern about too many presentations and insufficient time for discussions. Reading between the lines, he said, it was possible to perceive a desire that the meeting be not just about business but also a real fellowship of the churches.

Archbishop Nifon felt there was a contradiction in the concern about receiving documents before or during the meeting. If participants did not receive documents beforehand, then time would have to be set aside to read them at the meeting.

The General Secretary recognised the dilemma, noting that documents must be sent at least four weeks in advance to ensure they arrive in time. Even so, there is no assurance that they will be read. If the assumption is that it is not necessary to read them in advance, then there is no need to send them ahead of time. Concerning making time for discussion, again this can be done by reducing business to a minimum but the Central Committee has to deal with the business of the WCC.

New tools and methodologies can help to overcome these barriers to a certain extent.

Mr Doom remarked that the participants from the Pacific often do not receive their documents in time through the mail. He suggested, that, rather than receiving the documents, it would be helpful to receive an annotated agenda with a short explanation of the issues to be discussed.

11. PREPARATION FOR CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2003

Rev. Sabine Udodesku presented the "Draft Agenda of the Central Committee 2003". The officers had decided to try to shorten the meeting by one day. It will therefore start on the Tuesday and conclude at lunchtime the following Tuesday. Two committees will meet at the Ramada Hotel, the four others will meet in the Ecumenical Centre. By reducing the length of the meeting, using meeting rooms in the Ecumenical Centre, thus with no need for interpretation equipment at the hotel, CHF 80,000 have been saved, a reduction of 10%. One proposed change was to hold the Women's meeting on Wednesday lunchtime, so the women could meet before the election of the new General Secretary. She drew attention to the time reserved on Sunday, 31 August, at Bossey. The Moderator explained that as the General Secretary will retire at the end of 2003 the officers thought that it would be appropriate to organise a worship service at the Ecumenical Centre at 17h00; participants would then be taken by bus to Bossey for a barbecue supper at 19h00, outside or inside, depending on the weather, to conclude at 21h00.

The Executive and Programme Committees will meet on Sunday and Monday, 24 and 25 August. As the Executive Committee meetings are generally quite short before Central Committee Dr Kirkpatrick asked,, if it would be necessary to meet on both Sunday and Monday, or whether Monday would not be sufficient. The General Secretary responded that on the assumption that the Finance Sub-Committee meet for a half-day before the Executive Committee meets, and as there would be no need for the other Sub-Committees to meet, this should be possible. Staff would work on this and inform the committee members accordingly. Mr Lemopoulos noted that this would also enable Executive Committee members who are part of the Programme Committee to be free for that.

Bishop Hilarion asked if the session on the election of the new General Secretary could be changed from Thursday, August 28 to Wednesday, August 27, or from the

morning to the afternoon session on Thursday. This was because, for some of the Orthodox, August 28 is the Dormition of the Mother of God on the old calendar and worship is planned that morning. Dr Raiser said staff would look into this.

Ms Jacques presented a document "CC 2003 Plenary: Caring for Life", and said this overall theme would lead us through the Central Committee and the three plenaries. She explained that the theme would focus on human dignity and the value of life. The Caring for Life plenary would focus on the issue of bio-genetics. It was proposed to prepare background documents to introduce this complex topic, taking into account the Theology of Life programme and challenges today, with theological reflection based on the Faith and Order study.

Dr Kirkpatrick recognised that these were important issues but wondered whether, if there is war, it might not be necessary to re-focus the Caring for Life on, for example, new technologies for war. He suggested it would be necessary to be prepared to take a second look at the plans, depending on the context. Bishop Koppe asked if documentation from member churches would be included. He suggested it would be opportune to facilitate exchanges and links in this field as a number of churches have activities in this area. He offered to facilitate contacts with these.

Rev. Gobena queried the choice of theme; it seemed to him that there were issues and problems on the world agenda such as poverty, hunger and HIV/AIDS, which were more serious than the theme proposed. The General Secretary, in response, reminded the Executive Committee that one of the recommendations from the Programme Committee asked the WCC to look at the question of bio-ethics and related issues. The JPC team had developed the concern around this particular issue, which had never been discussed before by the Central Committee. After the assembly, in 1999, the Central Committee adopted a framework for programme work with four focal points, e.g. Being Church; Caring for Life; Ministry of Reconciliation; Service Amidst Globalisation. Since then sessions have been held on the three other foci, but not on Caring for Life. This was a new emphasis at the Harare assembly, building on work done on the Theology of Life, which had not received any exposure. The idea was to use the last but one meeting of the Central Committee to focus on this fourth issue.

Concerning regional meetings, the General Secretary reminded the Executive Committee that there has been a certain rotation on each continental region at Central Committee meetings, reflecting on the common ecumenical agenda. This time it is the turn of Latin America.

Concerning HIV/AIDS the General Secretary referred to the major conference in Nairobi a year ago, which was the origin of a massive plan of involvement for WCC and member churches. While not denying the urgency of these concerns, he wanted to suggest that WCC has tried to be sensitive to the vital concerns in the Southern Hemisphere and in the process has not addressed the vital moral/ethical issues arising in the Northern Hemisphere. Yet these are among the most pressing and vexing issues for churches in the North and the churches look to the WCC to provide a space to be engaged in a genuine ecumenical spirit. So far, he noted, we have shied away from discussing the ethics of life, which is potentially very controversial and beset with sensitive issues. The theme for the Central Committee is a very timid attempt to find a way to feature an open discussion. The debate is taking place in the churches and they are looking to the WCC to open the debate to a wider forum.

In response to a comment from Bishop Mar Theophilus, the General Secretary agreed that focusing on ethics of life could include HIV/AIDS. Archbishop Karim queried the appropriate placing the issue of people with disabilities and human sexuality, and drew attention also to the strong debate within the churches and society about the pro-life issue. Ms Jacques said she was taking note of the discussion and the issues raised.

The General Secretary reminded the Executive Committee of the recommendation from the Programme Committee at the last Central Committee meeting to reserve time for Youth concerns, which is why one of the plenaries will address this. Like last year, where the theme of 'Being Church' was reflected in the regional plenary and in the one on Racism, both the Youth and Latin American regional plenaries would reflect the theme of 'Caring for Life'. This is not exclusively a JPC theme, he noted, so it is hoped to shape the Youth plenary to reflect the relevance of this theme for the younger generation. He encouraged the Executive Committee to share its proposals and concerns in this context.

Dean Gadegaard and Bishop McKinley Young expressed the hope that there could be a discussion on how to increase the engagement of youth in the ecumenical movement, both nationally and locally

12. REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ISSUES SUB-COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Sub-Committee Mr Weiderud presented the revised texts of the proposed actions, which the Executive Committee **adopted** as follows:

12.1 Minute on Cyprus

The World Council of Churches' Executive Committee, meeting from 18-21 February 2003, in Bossey, Switzerland, acknowledges that this is a critical week for the Cypriot people in their efforts to reunite their divided country. The WCC has closely monitored the developments in Cyprus since the 1974 Turkish military occupation of the island and its subsequent division. In addition to providing humanitarian assistance to the displaced, the WCC Executive Committee recalls its numerous public statements and actions in solidarity with the Church of Cyprus and all religious and ethnic communities of Cyprus, reiterating always that the WCC considers the present status quo unacceptable, as it violates the sovereignty and unity of Cyprus, the fundamental human rights of its people and poses threats to their security and to peace and stability in the wider region. The WCC has always especially affirmed its strong commitment to a peaceful and just settlement of the Cyprus Problem within UN Security Council resolutions.

The WCC Executive Committee has witnessed with encouragement the recent developments on the political and civil society levels in Cyprus, in particular, the increasing public, popular demand of the Turkish Cypriot community for the reunification of the island and its entry as such into the EU as well as the willingness of both Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities to live together peacefully once again. In light of this, the WCC Executive Committee wants to take this opportunity to express its appreciation for the continued role of the United Nations and the personal commitment of its Secretary General, Mr Kofi Annan, for providing his good offices to resume negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leadership after a lengthy period of stalemate.

We especially welcome both the efforts of the UN Secretary General in providing the 'Basis for Agreement on A Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem', of 11 November 2002, (otherwise referred to as the "Annan Plan") which entails a blueprint for a peaceful resolution of the Cyprus problem based on UN Security Council resolutions and the establishment of a Cypriot federation, as a basis for negotiations, as well as the decision of the leaders of the European Union, at the Copenhagen Summit on 12-13 December, 2002 to accept Cyprus as a full member of the Union by 2004.

Bringing about a sustainable peaceful solution to a political conflict can be a long and arduous process, which requires the patience and goodwill of all parties concerned. We pray that the day when all communities in Cyprus will trust one another again and live together in harmony and peace is now near. We pray for the leaders of both communities, as primary actors faced with the responsibility to find a just and durable peace, to act with wisdom and courage. The international community, in its turn, must continue its tireless efforts to accompany the people of Cyprus in reaching a solution that will provide all ethnic and religious groups in Cyprus with a feeling of certainty, security and justice. At this important juncture in the history of this island all religious communities in Cyprus must be guided by the spirit of reconciliation and prophetic vision to live this moment of *kairos.* The WCC Executive Committee in its turn wants to assure the Church and all people of Cyprus that it will continue to stand in solidarity with them in their quest for peace, justice and prosperity.

12.2 Minute on the peace process in Sri Lanka

At its last meeting in Geneva, Switzerland (26th August-3rd September, 2002) the WCC Central Committee adopted a statement on South Asia including Sri Lanka. The statement welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) arrived at between the government of Sri Lanka and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) and urged the ecumenical community to accompany and support the churches in Sri Lanka in their journey to peace.

The Council has continued to monitor the Peace Process that has contributed in a substantial manner towards confidence building and to defuse tension and conflict in the North. The peace process has gained tremendous enthusiasm and support of the people who have suffered two decades of hardship, deprivation and loss as a result of the ongoing ethnic conflict. While much has been achieved, much more needs to be done. An agreement has yet to be reached on issues of resettlement of internally displaced persons, disarmament and the High Security Zones. Also remaining on the table to be tackled are sensitive issues like human rights and recruitment of children for war that LTTE continues to deny.

The journey to peace is only half way through and much remains to be covered. Obstacles are bound to come up like the recent aborted attempt by LTTE to smuggle arms into the country. These have to be taken in their stride and addressed diligently and firmly. The real test will come when parties begin to outline a constitutional framework that provides for devolution of power.

The role of the Norwegian government in facilitating and accompanying the peace process in a tenacious and sensitive manner needs to be recognised and appreciated. The international community should now come forward to provide the much needed aid and assistance for reconstruction and rehabilitation because it will go a long way to sustain the peace process. There is an urgent need to revive the domestic economy so that the people can benefit and take hope from the much promised peace dividend. While Norway and Japan have themselves committed significant help, other developed nations should follow their example.

The churches in Sri Lanka have provided cautious and critical support to the peace process, amongst others through inter-religious cooperative endeavours to mobilise people for peace and national reconciliation. They have raised concern about the situation of the Muslim minority in the Northeast and about the ordinary people who have not reaped the benefits of the peace process due to lack of relief and rehabilitation in the affected areas.

The Executive Committee welcomes the developments in Sri Lanka in relation to the peace process and expresses its appreciation for the consistent cooperative efforts of the National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka and the Church of Norway, Council for Ecumenical Relations and International Affairs, to pursue relentlessly their efforts for peace. It calls on member churches and related agencies to:

- remain constant in prayer for the churches and people of Sri Lanka;
- support and encourage the churches of Sri Lanka in their continued witness to peace, justice and national reconciliation;
- discuss appropriate ways of providing ecumenical assistance to the churches in Sri Lanka in their task of reconstruction and rehabilitation.

12.3 Statement against Military Action in Iraq

We believe God made us and all creation. God requires us to seek peace and justice. We believe that with God's grace no work of faith, hope and love is too hard for those who trust God. Therefore, as followers of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, led by His Spirit, we call upon the leaders of the world and all people of faith:

STOP the threats of war against Iraq!

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Bossey, Switzerland, 18-21 February 2003, remains extremely concerned with the continued calls for military action against Iraq by the US and some Western governments and

strongly deplores the fact that the most powerful nations of this world again regard war as an acceptable instrument of foreign policy.

At the same time, the Executive Committee is equally concerned with the Iraqi violation of fundamental human rights and urges the government of Iraq to comply with international human rights norms and standards and with binding UN Security Council resolutions.

The Executive Committee welcomes the united and consistent message of heads of churches of every Christian tradition around the world against this war. The committee is extremely encouraged that churches are not only taking a leading position in preventing this war, but also preparing to avert a humanitarian catastrophe at the same time through preparedness to respond to the needs of innocent civilians in Iraq.

The Executive Committee affirms the courageous stance of church leaders for peaceful solutions, especially in countries like the USA and the UK in direct opposition to the positions taken by their political leadership.

The Executive Committee welcomes and appreciates the efforts of all church leaders and ecumenical organisations to mobilise public opinion to prevent war in Iraq and to pursue peace. It endorses wholeheartedly the statement adopted by church leaders at a meeting convened by the WCC, in Berlin, Germany, on 5th February 2003, to discuss a common response to the threat of military action against Iraq and expresses its appreciation to the Protestant Church in Germany for hosting the event and arranging a hearing with Germany's Head of Government. It further recognises the recent meetings of US church leaders with government leaders in the UK.

Bearing in mind the reality that the 1991 Gulf War did not bring peace to the Iraqi people, but severe suffering under 12 years of economic sanctions; noting the recent developments relating to possible military action in Iraq and the report presented by the United Nations Weapons Inspectors to the UN Security Council on the 14th February; and the mounting public opinion against a war in Iraq evidenced by the turnout of millions of people all over the world who gathered in peace rallies; and

Taking into account that action of the WCC and churches must:

a. be guided by the moral obligation to ensure sanctity of life and the ethical conviction that war is not an acceptable way to resolve conflicts,

b. follow the need to promote public and international support for the UN as custodian of lawful action regarding Iraq,
c. understand that the carefully designed mechanism of the UN weapons inspections is a long term tool and that 20 years of inspections are more effective, less costly and more relevant than 20 days of war,
d. recognise the necessity not only to disarm Iraq, but also make the whole Middle East region free from weapons of mass destruction,
e. acknowledge the negative impact on Christian-Muslim relations and increased emigration of Christians from the region where Christianity was born,
f. highlight the need for a durable and just solution of the Arab-Israeli conflicts, and an end of the illegal occupation of Palestine,
g. promote democratisation and compliance with global human rights norms and standards in all Arab countries as well as in Israel.

Recalling the "statement on the threats of military actions against Iraq" by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches meeting in Geneva 26 August to 3 September 2002; and

Reaffirming that the war against Iraq would be immoral, unwise and in breach of the principles of the UN Charter, the Executive Committee:

- ***warns*** that war in Iraq will cause a humanitarian crisis of grave magnitude with untold human suffering, especially for the children of Iraq, loss of life, property, environmental destruction and waste of precious resources; it will reinforce and polarise division and hatred between communities resulting in further destabilisation of the region;
- ***strongly appeals*** to the UN Security Council to uphold the principles of the UN Charter which strictly limit the legitimate use of military force and to refrain from creating negative precedents and lowering the threshold for using violent means to solve international conflicts;
- ***further appeals*** to the political leaders of the US and the UK to refrain from a unilateral pre-emptive military action against Iraq;
- ***calls insistently on*** the member nations of the UN Security Council to adequately reinforce and allow reasonable time to UN weapons inspectors to successfully fulfil their mandate to disarm and destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction;

- ***strongly urges*** the government of Iraq to fully cooperate with UN weapons inspectors to ensure that weapons of mass destruction, related research and production facilities are completely destroyed;
- ***condemns*** the Iraqi government's violations of fundamental rights and freedoms in Iraq and ***urges its leadership*** to guarantee full respect of the civil and political, economic, social and cultural human rights, including religious rights, of all its citizens;
- ***encourages*** the churches to continue to challenge and expose any national security policies that promote pre-emptive military strikes as legitimate self-defence undermining the principles and the spirit of the UN Charter;
- ***calls*** on all churches to intensify further their engagement in efforts for peace; and in turn ***commends*** the February 5th Berlin Statement to churches calling them to join this act of witness for a peaceful resolution of this conflict;
- ***invites*** faithful men, women and children everywhere to engage in earnest prayers that leaders of the nations may be directed along the path to seek peaceful resolution of the conflict in Iraq;
- ***proposes*** the first day of Lent 2003, a day for reflection and conversion, to be a day of prayer for peace in Iraq in all member churches and worldwide.

13. REPORT OF THE PROGRAMME SUB-COMMITTEE

Dr Marion Best presented the report.

13.1 Decade to Overcome Violence

The Sub-Committee recommended to the Executive Committee:

- that the 2003 theme of the Decade to Overcome Violence be "Sudan – Healing and Reconciliation." The Sub-Committee heard from Dr Sam Kobia about the many consultations between churches and ecumenical organisations in Africa and WCC staff in support of this theme for the Decade at this particular historical moment;

- that the selection of the 2004 theme for the DOV be made at the time of the Central Committee meeting in August-September 2003

The Executive Committee **approved** the two recommendations.

13.2 Religious Plurality
The Sub-Committee recommended further to the Executive Committee:

- that the principle of convening a small consultation on the issue of "Religious Plurality beyond San Antonio?" be approved, recognising the importance of the issue and the availability of special funding. The Sub-Committee affirmed the importance of discussing this issue with participation from the constituencies of Faith and Order, Mission and Ecumenical Formation and Inter-Religious Relations and Dialogue. The Sub-Committee asks that the title of the consultation be reviewed to ensure that it is widely understood. The Sub-committee also noted that the process leading up to the Consultation is broader than that outlined in the document as it should consider the importance of the multi-cultural context in which dialogue takes place and consider relations with faiths outside the Abrahamic tradition.

The Moderator queried the second part of the recommendation. If, as it seems, the suggestion is to extend dialogue beyond the Abrahamic tradition, he felt it important at the present time to emphasise the urgency of Christian-Muslim dialogue. Dr Best explained that the proposal was not only focused on dialogue, but also on mission. The recommendation that in the process leading up to the consultation the importance of the multi-cultural context and religions outside the Abrahamic tradition be considered was in response to concerns raised in the discussion by Bishop Mar Theophilus and Rev. Lakawa.

Dr Alan Falconer drew attention to the fact that this consultation was in the context of a study group, which has been going into the issue in depth over the last four years. A small group is scheduled to meet this year and again next year. He suggested that in the Programme Committee report a number of things had been conflated. The work going on in relation to Christian-Muslim Dialogue is expected to continue, while the consultation process which is being recommended has a wider remit, arising out of a recommendation from Central Committee that Faith and Order, CWME and the Office of Inter-religious Dialogue work together on the issue of a theology of religious plurality. The discussions, which led to the proposal, envisage a small working group - perhaps 12 members, four from each of the constituencies - who would meet annually at Bossey to explore this question. It was felt that the WCC needs to see how far it can encourage the churches to move beyond the position adopted at San Antonio and the subsequent Baar Consultation (in preparation for the Canberra Assembly). Therefore the recommendation is that the process explore the topic under the title "Theological Plurality - Beyond San

Antonio?" It is hoped the consultation group will open up perspectives that may take us beyond the San Antonio Statement, which tried to hold mission and dialogue in tension.

It may well be, he added, that another specific event will take place within the WCC to explore the three Abrahamic religions and their relationship, particularly on the basis of a recent book by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. But this is a separate initiative, the intention of the recommendation being to explore the issue of religious plurality in a wider framework.

On the basis of this explanation, the Executive Committee **adopted** the recommendation.

13.3 Relocation and De-centralisation

The Sub-Committee reviewed efforts underway to relocate the Middle East and Pacific desks to the regions, noting the importance of working closely with the churches in this process. The Sub-Committee **recommended**:

- that, taking into account the concerns of the Pacific churches as expressed in the many letters sent by church leaders, the Executive Committee affirm the sending of a high-level WCC delegation as soon as possible to the Pacific to consult with churches on the relocation process;

- that the document "New Ways of Strengthening Relationships with Churches and Ecumenical Partners in the Regions: Implementation of the Common Understanding and Vision Policy Statement" be approved as amended (see Appendix III).

In addition a review process of all the de-centralised capacities of the WCC was recommended. The August 2003 Executive Committee should receive a report which identifies the issues to be addressed in developing a consistent policy.

- The Sub-Committee received information about the de-centralisation of programmes such as the Indigenous Peoples Programme and the Dalit Solidarity Programme. Reflecting the success of this de-centralised style in the case of the Ecumenical Disabilities Advocacy Network, the Executive Committee affirms this methodology of working closely with member churches and ecumenical organisations making joint appointments wherever possible.

- The Sub-Committee asks the Executive Committee to reiterate WCC's commitment to the Indigenous Peoples of the world and recommends that care be taken to ensure that the Central Committee recognises this programme as a core commitment of the WCC and that necessary budgetary arrangements be made to support the work within programme budgets. WCC staff in Geneva is requested to maintain close communication with the de-centralised staff to ensure integration of these areas of work within the WCC programmes.

The Executive Committee **adopted** these recommendations.

13.4 Internal Cooperation

The Sub-Committee affirmed proposals relating to internal cooperation and encouraged staff to continue working in this direction. The document "Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Framework for the WCC" was received and affirmed and the Executive Committee asked that a progress report on this be presented to the next meeting of the Programme Committee.

The Executive Committee **agreed**.

13.5 Commissions and Advisory Groups

The Sub-Committee proposed to Executive Committee to recommend to the Programme Committee for Central Committee meeting in August-September 2003:

- that the decision made by the Central Committee in 1999 to establish advisory groups on Regional Relations and Ecumenical Sharing, Justice, Peace and Creation, Youth and Women after the 8th Assembly be rescinded in light of the internal structural changes which have taken place;

- that two new Commissions be established – the Commission of the Churches on Diakonia and Development and the Commission on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation;

- that the composition of these two commissions be reviewed by the Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee of the Executive Committee and membership in the Commissions be presented to the Central Committee for approval in August 2003;

- that a Reference Group for the Decade to Overcome Violence be reaffirmed;

- that appropriate actions be taken concerning the establishment of reference groups for Inter-Religious Relations and Dialogue and Church and Ecumenical Relations at the August 2003 Central Committee meeting. These actions should be based on a review of advisory groups carried out by staff before the meeting;
- that this review should also consider the role of officers in the advisory bodies and suggest ways that the officers of the Commissions can work together more effectively in the future;

- that efforts to strengthen collaboration and find new ways of working between all the Commissions, particularly CCIA, Justice, Peace and Creation, and the Commission of the Churches on Diakonia and Development, be continued.

In the discussion it was noted, that IRRD and CER currently have Advisory Groups but with their placing in the General Secretariat, Reference Groups would be more appropriate. The chairpersons of the Advisory Groups would be invited to attend Programme and Central Committee.

There was discussion about whether, in view of financial constraints, to invite to Central Committee only those moderators whose Commissions or Advisory Groups had met since the last Central Committee. The general opinion was that this would not save much money and that it would be better to invite all concerned, particularly in view of the change of status of some of them, to ensure that that the process and decision to restructure is open and transparent.

Dean Gadegaard asked what the difference was between Reference Groups and Advisory Groups. The General Secretary explained: Advisory Groups are appointed by Central Committee and have a seven-year mandate. Reference groups are less formal, less tied to the inter-assembly period and less limited to the task of a specific programme. Members are appointed by SLG. The reference group formula is used for flexibility; members are selected for their ability to provide advice on a particular aspect of WCC's work. He noted that the system has worked well so far.

Concerning the participation or not of the officers of the Advisory Groups at Central Committee, they could be offered the choice; however, to Central Committee it is useful for them to be there to interpret the work of the programme.

In response to a question from Bishop Koppe on the number of members of the advisory groups affected, Ms Jacques said there were approximately 18 in IRRD and 15-20 in CER. The General Secretary said that normally there were less than

20 members in Advisory Groups and less than ten in Reference Groups. Dr Best noted the need to consult with the chairpersons of the Advisory Groups and consultative bodies concerning their participation in the Central Committee and the Programme Committee.
Mrs Karagdag asked when this change-over would take place and what would happen to the current members. Dr Raiser said the proposal was that this take place at the next Central Committee and that they have their first meeting later in 2003 or in early 2004. Members of the present Advisory Groups need to be informed of the planned change and that their names may be proposed for the new group. Dr Kirkpatrick cautioned that people not be alienated, that everything be done to maintain their goodwill and enthusiasm. Dean Gadegaard suggested that thanks be recorded to all those who have served on these groups. He noted that in the report of the Programme Sub-Committee it is not recorded that these groups will be disbanded. Dr Best said this was because the sub-committee had reviewed the documents and made recommendations to the Executive Committee. It was for the Executive Committee to take the recommendations to the Programme Committee and the Central Committee in August.

The Executive Committee **agreed** that this discussion should be noted in the Minutes, but not adopted as an action.

13.6 Relations with Constituencies
The Sub-Committee noted that even during a time of financial difficulties, activities to strengthen and maintain relationships with churches had continued, and it affirmed efforts to use representatives of governing bodies to represent the WCC. The Sub-Committee discussed the report on the consultation between WCC, REOs, and ecumenical agencies/specialised ministries. The Executive Committee encouraged this process and asked that a report on follow-up be presented to the next Central Committee.

On recommendation of the Sub-Committee the Executive Committee affirmed plans for discussions on a "new ecumenical configuration" with other partner bodies, including Christian World Communions and National Councils of Churches.

The Sub-Committee recommended that Faith & Order make more visible the relationship of ecclesiological concerns in the "Nature and Purpose of the Church" as they relate to the work of the Special Commission.

The Sub-Committee suggests that the report of the Special Commission be sent to member churches (in the form of a booklet), together with the Central Committee decisions and resources from the *Ecumenical Review* to encourage churches to study the document, engage in discussions about the recommendations therein, and communicate their reactions to the World Council of Churches.
The recommendations were all **approved** by the Executive Committee.

13.7 Assembly
The Sub-Committee offered the following **recommendations** for the Core Group of the Assembly Planning Committee:
- That the Assembly last for 10 working days and be held from 14-23 February 2006 (with arrivals on 13 February and departures on 24 February). In considering these dates, the Assembly Planning Committee will need to take into consideration where the Sunday falls in planning the flow of the meeting and may want to adjust the proposed dates accordingly.

- With respect to the theme of the Assembly, the Sub-Committee noted that the theme should be responsive to the reality of life, be dynamic and bring a message to the world. It should also take into account the local reality of the Latin American situation, and the Sub-Committee noted that a consultation process on the theme with local churches has been requested. The Sub-Committee also noted the aspiration of churches and ecumenical bodies to move towards greater collaboration in planning of major assemblies and suggests that this be considered in deciding upon the theme of the WCC Assembly.

Regarding a recommendation on the theme of the assembly, the Sub-Committee felt it had gone as far as it could, taking into account the comments made earlier in the meeting. The moderator asked when and how the Executive Committee could have more time for reflection on the theme, as it must be finalised by Central Committee in August 2003. Bishop Koppe asked how closer collaboration on assemblies might be encouraged with, for example, LWF. Dr Best reminded him that at present it was premature to coordinate the themes, and that the best that could be done was to share resources. The General Secretary said that the WCC would have preferred, and had hoped for, closer coordination. However, he had been advised by LWF that it was constrained by its constitution to hold an assembly every six years (it would take place in 2003). LWF would take the opportunity at its assembly to look at the possibility of drawing closer together in the future. WCC and LWF have an exploratory joint working group, but currently it could not do more than affirm the wish for closer coordination. In the meantime, there is a certain amount of cross-

fertilisation as each organisation is represented in the other's assembly planning group. Dr Kirkpatrick underlined that now is the time to try to obtain more flexibility for the future, not in three or four years time.

Concerning the question from the moderator about reflections on the theme, the General Secretary reminded the Executive Committee that the Assembly Planning Committee will meet the following week at Bossey, with the theme as the main agenda item. Their report can be shared with the Executive Committee. With reference to a suggestion to consult with the member churches, the General Secretary feared this would be rather unwieldy and members of the governing bodies were better placed to respond. Bishop Mar Theophilus said the Assembly Planning Committee should take into account two specific realities - the Latin American reality and the themes of world conferences prior to the assembly - and formulate proposals in the light of these for the Committee's consideration. The Central Committee will take the final decision on the theme as it has done in the past.

The Executive Committee **agreed** and **adopted** the report.

14. REPORT OF THE STAFFING AND NOMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

14.1 Staffing Report

In a closed session, Justice Adinyira reported on behalf of the Staffing and Nominations Sub- Committee.

14.2 Appointment

It was reported that the Central Committee had ratified by postal vote the following appointment made by the Officers at their meeting in November 2002 (see below, Actions by Officers' Meeting): Dr William **Temu** (Tanzania, Roman Catholic Church), from his previous position of Programme Executive for Africa, as **Director of Management** for four years as from 1 January 2003.

14.3 Contract Extensions

The Executive Committee authorised the General Secretary to proceed with the following contract extensions for three years, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches to be binding only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contract extensions.

General Secretariat
Inter-Religious Relations and Dialogue
Dr Tarek **Mitri** (Lebanon, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch & All the East (Eastern)), **Programme Executive**, from 30 April 2004

Programme
Justice, Peace, Creation
Ms Aruna **Gnanadason** (India, Church of South India), **Programme Executive**, from 31 May 2004

Faith & Order
Rev. Deenabandhu **Manchala** (India, United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India), **Programme Executive**, from 28 February 2004

Diakonia & Solidarity
Dr Mathews **George** (India, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar), **Programme Executive**, from 31 May 2004

Management
Human Resources & Technical Services
Ms Christina **Minezac** (Switzerland, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Eastern)), from 31 August 2004

This was **agreed**.

14.4 Departures
It was reported that the following staff members would leave the service of the World Council of Churches on the date indicated:

General Secretariat
Previous organisation : Director Cluster on FS&A
Mr Robert **Christeler** (Switzerland, Swiss Protestant Church Federation), 31 August 2003

Previous organisation : Director Cluster on Communication
Ms Kristine **Greenaway** (Canada, United Church of Canada), 31 January 2004

Church & Ecumenical Relations
Mr Huibert **Van Beek** (Netherlands, Swiss Protestant Church Federation), 31 December 2003

Programme
Mission & Ecumenical Formation
Ms Evelyne **Appiah** (Ghana, Methodist Church), 31 May 2003

Diakonia & Solidarity
Mr Feiloakitau **Tevi** (Fiji, Anglican Church of Fiji), 31 May 2003

14.5 For Information
(Actions by Officers' Meeting, November 2002)
At their meeting in November 2002, the Officers authorized the General Secretary to proceed with the following internal transfers for appointments and contract extensions, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches to be binding only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contracts or contract extensions.

14.6 Appointments

General Secretariat
Dr William **Temu** (Tanzania, Roman Catholic Church), to be transferred from his current position (Programme Executive for Africa) and be appointed as **Director of Management** for four years as from 1 January 2003
- To be confirmed by postal vote by the members of Central Committee -

Programme
Dr André **Karamaga** (Rwanda, Presbyterian Church in Rwanda), to be transferred from his current position (Consultant, Focus on Africa) and be appointed as **Programme Executive for Africa, Diakonia & Solidarity** for three years as from 1 January 2003

14.7 Contract Extensions

Programme
Dr Rogate **Mshana** (Tanzania, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania), **Programme Executive, Justice, Peace & Creation,** for three years from 31 January 2004

Mr Alexander **Belopopsky** (UK, Ecumenical Patr. of Constantinople (Eastern)) **Programme Executive for Europe, Diakonia & Solidarity**, contract to be changed into an indefinite contract from 31 January 2004

Dr Guillermo **Kerber** (Uruguay, Roman Catholic Church) previously Consultant, as **Programme Executive, International Affairs**, for two years from 1 February 2003

This was **agreed**.

14.8 Departure
The following staff member will leave the service of the World Council of Churches on the date indicated: Rev. Freddy **Knutsen** (Norway, Church of Norway), **Programme Executive**, 31 December 2003

14.9 New Members of Central Committee
The Sub-Committee **recommended** that the Executive Committee submit the following names to the Central Committee for approval:
Rev. Iteffa Gobena of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus to replace Rev. Yadessa Daba
Rev. Cibele Kuss of the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil to replace Diakonin Valmi Ione Becker
Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting of the Episcopal Church USA to replace Dr Pamela Chinnis
Rt. Rev. Tom Butler of the Church of England to replace Rt. Rev. Barry Rogerson
Rev. Dr Nicolae Moşoiu of the Romanian Orthodox Church to replace Rev. Prof. Aurel Jivi
Bishop Dr Martin Hein of the Protestant Church in Germany to replace Landesbischöfin Dr Margot Käßmann
Dr Priscilla Joseph of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan to replace Ms Jenny Siama Paul
Bishop Cephas Z. Mukandi of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe to replace Rev. Farai Chirisa
Concerning a replacement following the resignation of Ms Abigail Ogunsanya of the Church of the Lord Aladura from the Executive and Central Committees, further discussion and clarification with the church is required.

The Executive Committee **agreed**.

14.10 Membership Applications

The Sub-Committee **recommended** the following steps in view of resuming the reception of new member churches:

- Approval of the amended Rule I on Membership by the Central Committee at its forthcoming meeting in 2003, according to the recommendations approved by the Central Committee in 2002.
- Resumption of the reception of new member churches at the meeting of the Central Committee in February 2005.
- Provisional implementation of the new criteria for membership following the approval of the amended Rule I and pending final approval by the Ninth Assembly.
- Continuation of the work on membership applications currently in process (including visits) and on new applications.

The Sub-Committee **recommended** that the following application be submitted to the Central Committee for approval at its forthcoming meeting in 2003:

The Moravian Church in America, Northern Province, and the Moravian Church in America, Southern Province, have decided to apply for single membership as Moravian Church in America, in the light of the report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC.

The Sub-Committee **recommended** that the following applications for the status of associate council be submitted to the Central Committee for approval at its forthcoming meeting in 2003:

Christian Council of Nigeria
Christian Council of Norway
Council of Churches of Puerto Rico
Protestant Federation of Haiti
Protestant Council of Rwanda

The Sub-Committee **recommended** that the following applications for recognition as International Ecumenical Organisation in working relationship with the WCC be submitted to the Central Committee for approval at its forthcoming meeting in 2003:

Global Fellowship of Christian Youth
Habitat for Humanity International

The Executive Committee **agreed** to the recommendations.

14.11 Follow-up of Membership Study

The Sub-Committee **recommended** the following actions to implement the recommendations addressed to the Executive Committee by the Membership Study Group and approved by the Central Committee in 2002:

- That the members of the Sub-Committee on Staffing and Nominations be regularly informed of applications for membership in process and new applications, and their advice and assistance be asked especially on applications coming from churches in their region or belonging to their ecclesial tradition.

- That the members of the sub-committee, and if necessary other members of the Executive Committee, be involved in the visits to churches applying for membership, especially to churches in their region or belonging to their ecclesial tradition.

- That the Executive Committee ensure that 1) within "an association, convention or federation of autonomous churches" applying for WCC membership, each church individually agrees with the Basis and fulfils the criteria for membership; and 2) that any church seeking affiliation with an association, convention or federation of autonomous churches which is a member of the WCC agrees with the Basis and fulfils the criteria for membership.
The implications of this recommendation for Rule I on Membership should be included in the amended Rule I that will be submitted to the Central Committee for approval at its forthcoming meeting in 2003.

- That a memorandum of procedures be developed, enabling the sub-committee and the Executive Committee to deal sensitively with situations of member churches which 1) do not participate in the life of the Council in any respect over a period spanning two Assemblies; 2) do not make any effort to assist in the financial support of the Council for an extended period of time; 3) whose self-definition, teaching and practice have evolved in ways that may no longer be consistent with the Basis and the criteria for membership; 4) claim WCC membership by reason of membership in an association, convention or federation of churches which is a member of the Council but do not meet the criteria for membership.
A proposal for such a memorandum should be brought to the Executive Committee at its next meeting in 2003.

- That a proposal be brought to the next meeting of the Executive Committee in 2003 for groupings of WCC member churches, e.g. geographically, confessionally

or according to other models, for the purpose of representation of the churches at Central Committee and their participation in the life and work of the Council.

- That a progress report on the follow-up and implementations of the recommendations on membership be shared with the Steering Group of the Special Commission at its forthcoming meeting.

The Executive Committee **agreed** to the recommendations.

14.12 Consensus Decision-Making

The Sub-Committee **recommended** to the Executive Committee
- to convene a small committee in June 2003 to work out a more considered report on the consensus decision-making process;
- to plan for a larger meeting in 2004 to work on rules and a manual for Central Committee members and the Officers on how to handle consensus decision-making. Different cultural backgrounds and practices need to be explored and included.

The Executive Committee **agreed.**

14.13 WCC 9th Assembly 2006 Seat Allocation

The Sub-Committee **recommended** to the Executive Committee to confirm the proposed guidelines:
- In order to ensure an inclusive and balanced assembly the following goals should be established: women 50%; youth 25%; lay persons 50%; Orthodox 25%.
- The total number of delegates (85% + 15%) should not significantly exceed 700.
- A minimum of one delegate for each member church is a goal, provided that this can be accomplished within the other established goals of representation for the Assembly.
- The model used for Harare for churches with significant membership in several countries and regions should (with suitable modifications) be used again.
- All churches should seek to make their delegation inclusive and balanced.

The Sub-Committee **recommended** further to the Executive Committee
- to try and work within the smallest possible number of delegates;
- to reserve 25% out of the 85% of seats for Orthodox Churches.

The Executive Committee **agreed**.

14.14 Staff Regulations

The Executive Committee received the Staff Regulations for information.

14.15 Kimbanguist Church

The Sub-Committee received and discussed a report on a theological dialogue meeting held with the Kimbanguist Church in January 2003, on certain developments in the doctrine and teaching of this church.

The Sub-Committee **recommended** that the following steps be taken:
That the General Secretary send a letter to the Spiritual Chief of the Kimbanguist Church, on behalf of the Executive Committee, stating the basic questions of the WCC regarding the doctrine and teaching of the church. This answer should be received before the meeting of the Central Committee in 2003.

That the General Secretary inform the other member churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Church of Christ in Congo of the meeting held with the Kimbanguist Church and the action taken by the Council.

These points were **agreed**.

The Executive Committee **adopted** the report of the Programme Sub-Committee.

15. REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

Bishop McKinley Young and Dean Gadegaard presented the report jointly. They thanked the staff for their energy and creativeness in facing the financial situation.

15.1 2002 Draft Results

The Finance Sub-Committee reviewed detailed reports of the draft results for the year. The operating deficit for the year was CHF 1 million and thus fell within the approved budget. The downward trend in contributions was further confirmed, with contributions at CHF 41 million falling short of budget by CHF 1.6 million. Investment and currency losses totalled CHF 3 million, of which CHF 1.7 million were unrealised losses. The presentation of results for the year also covered the draft balance sheet, the cash flow and use of investments during 2002. The balance sheet analysis highlighted a lack of coverage of Programme Funds of CHF 1.9 million, before reclassification of the Programme Funds. As requested by the Finance

Committee of the Central Committee in August 2002, work had been undertaken on the reclassification and is reported upon below.

The trends of reduced income and the financial situation presented in the draft balance sheet continue to send signals of financial crisis. The Finance Sub-Committee's recommendations in this light are presented below.
This section was **accepted** without change.

15.2 Budget 2003
The Sub-Committee reviewed the Budget 2003 schedules forming part of Document 12, as reviewed in the plenary on February 18, 2003. This budget complies with the Framework budget as approved by the extended Officers Meeting of November 2002. The Budget 2003 anticipates total income of CHF 43.4 million, expenditures of CHF 46.2 million and a drawdown of Programme Fund balances of CHF 3.8 million, thus allowing an amount of CHF 1 million to be credited to the General Reserve. The budget sets out the detailed income and expenses for the Core Programmes, the International Ecumenical Initiatives and the extraordinary budget, which gathers those costs of staff who will leave the Council in the course of 2003.

In addition, a Forecast for 2003 had been developed and was presented. The Forecast anticipates a reduction in the net credit to the General Reserve, estimated now at CHF 455,000. Production and other income is estimated at CHF 300,000 less than budget. Programme Funds available for drawdown in those Core Programmes requiring recourse to such funds are CHF 500,000 less than budgeted. These adverse developments are then compensated in part by certain cost reductions identified.

There were four areas of general concern.

1. In keeping with the current trend, contributions may further decrease. The Income Development Director confirmed to the Sub-Committee that in his opinion, there was a high risk that contributions be reduced in 2003.
2. There is continued pressure on staff costs. In particular, since the Framework was discussed in November, an increase in employer's pension fund contributions of 1% has been accepted, and discussion is now ongoing for an additional 1% considered necessary by the Pension Fund Board following assessment of its current financial situation. In addition, there is pressure to increase certain salaries and recruit additional staff members.

3. The existence of Programme Fund balances can stimulate the desire to spend, even where the expenditure has not been planned and approved in the budget.
4. The Forecast includes the assumption that undesignated income and membership income will increase slightly, while recent trends have been towards maintenance of membership income levels only.

The Sub-Committee considered that internal controls can and must be placed over the staff costs and the use of Programme Fund balances. In this respect, the Sub-Committee confirmed that monthly financial management reports are to continue to be sent to the Officers and the members of the Finance Sub-Committee, as agreed in the Executive Committee of Nyborg in February 2002.

The Sub-Committee considered that it was essential to work proactively with the ecumenical partners in identifying areas of common concern, in order to increase their financial involvement.

The Finance Sub-Committee **recommended** that the Executive Committee:

- Approve the Budget 2003
- Require that the following conditions be implemented:
  - Staff costs be no higher than the limit of CHF 16,831,000
  - A plan be prepared for the Officers Meeting of May 2003, setting out how the net credit to the General Reserve of CHF 1 million may be achieved in 2003 as required in the Framework budget. This plan must be adapted accordingly for any anticipated reductions in income, ensuring that the CHF 1 million credit be secured. It is proposed that Officers of the Finance Sub-Committee attend the Officers Meeting in May 2003.

The Finance Sub-Committee further **recommended** that specific proposals be developed for presentation to the meeting of the Officers indicating policy, structural and even constitutional changes required in order to reverse the negative trend regarding contribution income. The proposals and strategies should be based on a realistic assessment of contributions to be expected from different sources over the years 2004-2006.

In response to a question on the idea of working "proactively", Dean Gadegaard informed the Committee that there had been long discussions on the relationship between WCC and its partners. As part of the solution to the financial difficulties,

the Finance Sub-Committee would like to see the financial commitment from ecumenical partners increase in the future. He noted that a good dialogue had begun, especially through the WCC Round Table, but that it should be strengthened and continued in order to meet the requests of ecumenical partners in the hope that this will encourage them to continue to contribute to WCC. Mr Michiel Hardon added that 90% of the WCC income comes from 20 ecumenical partners so that it is critical that they are convinced of the good work of the WCC, to at least stabilise their contributions if not increase the income.

Dr Raiser reminded the Committee that as it is the churches, which are represented on the governing bodies of the WCC, many of these ecumenical partners are continually asked to provide support to an organisation where they have no formal representation at all in the governance structure. They would like to see their role not as donors, but as partners who are engaged with WCC in furthering the ecumenical cause, not only in finances but also in decision- making and in competencies. The partners expect WCC to open itself up to a way of working that gives necessary space for these competencies and voices.

The Moderator felt that now more than ever the member churches must be made aware of the gravity of the situation and take their responsibility and commit themselves financially. He felt that the proposal in the report takes a step forward in engaging ourselves proactively in dialogue with ecumenical partners.

After discussion a recommendation was made that the General Secretary take some action on future conversation with partners.

The Executive Committee **approved** the 2003 budget and the development of the specific proposals as described, for presentation to the Officers.

15.3 Pension Fund

The Sub-Committee heard a report on the current status of negotiations with the Pension Fund Board. It was agreed that in order to avoid the risk of the impact of International Accounting Standards regulations requiring additional charges of CHF 600,000 to be made to the results 2002 and forwards annually, it was necessary to reach agreement with the Pension Fund Board on the long term fixed employers' annual contribution rate to be applied. It was discussed that the most recent request from the Pension Fund Board was that the annual contribution for 2003 be increased to 14%, compared with the 13% agreed for 2003 in November 2002 and the 12% contributed in 2002.

The Finance Sub-Committee **recommended** that the Executive Committee authorize the staff to come to an agreement with the Pension Fund Board, with terms as favourable as possible, and as soon as possible.

The Committee **agreed** on the recommendation.

15.4. Investments
The Sub-Committee heard a brief report on the current investment guidelines governing the General Fund and Endowment Fund investment accounts. It was confirmed that the Investment Advisory Group would meet in March 2003 to review a report from the bankers analysing the impact to the Council of revising the guidelines to fixed income investments only.

The Finance Sub-Committee required that by the end of April, staff distribute to the members of the Finance Sub-Committee the reports from the Investment Advisory Group concerning the proposed restructuring of the portfolios.

The Finance Sub-Committee **recommended** that the Executive Committee authorize the Officers at its meeting in May to take decisions concerning the reduction in investment risk, based on the recommendations of the Investment Advisory Group and consultation with the Officers of the Finance Sub-Committee.

The Executive Committee **agreed** to forward the recommendation to the Officers meeting in May 2003.

15.5 Programme Fund Balance Analysis
The report on the analysis of Programme Fund balances and Support Services funds was presented. The report concluded that of CHF 13.5 million Programme Fund balances, CHF 255,000 may be released directly to General Reserves, since these balances were clearly derived from undesignated income sources. A further CHF 2.8 million of Programme Fund balances may be segregated as Specific Reserves, recognizing their quality as programme reserves of the Council, rather than balances payable to any third party. Analysis of the Support Services Funds identified a further CHF 1.3 million which may be released to the General Reserves.

The Finance Sub-Committee commended the work of the staff in clarifying this financial situation, and agreed that the effort be followed to its conclusion in the appropriate reclassifications in the final balance sheet for 2002.

15.6 Membership
The Finance Sub-Committee reviewed a report describing how the membership contributions might be calculated. The Sub-Committee commended and supported the efforts made by the membership campaign staff with the purpose of meeting the target of CHF 10 million set by the Harare Assembly.

The Sub-Committee reviewed the calculation mechanisms, and gave advice for further development of the plan.

The Finance Sub-Committee **recommended** that the Executive Committee:
- confirm the compulsory nature of the membership contributions; and
- require that the proposal be further developed for submission to the Officers for discussion in May 2003 and that it then be sent from the Officers to the Central Committee in August 2003, with a view to its implementation in 2004.

The Executive Committee **agreed** on the recommendations.

15.7 Assembly
The Finance Sub-Committee considered the state of financial planning for the Assembly. In the light of the current general financial situation of the churches, the Finance Sub-Committee **recommended** that the Executive Committee:
- Require that staff approach churches during the next quarter to determine their estimated financial commitment to the ninth Assembly
- Require that a preliminary Assembly budget be presented to the Finance Committee of the Central Committee in August 2003
- Require that if it were to appear that insufficient funding be available, and given the financial situation of the Council, alternative Assembly plans be brought to the Central Committee in August 2003. The plans should consider different degrees of scaling-down of the Assembly, and/or its postponement.

The Executive Committee **agreed** on the recommendations and adopted the report.

16. EVALUATION

Dr Best expressed concern at the small number of Executive Committee members who were left for the critical decision-making sessions. She asked that the scheduling be re-examined in the light of flights available for the members. Dr Raiser proposed that each member have a regular substitute who could come in the

event that the member would not be able to attend an Executive Committee meeting. This matter was referred to the Officers meeting in May 2003.

17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The General Secretary shared the dates for future meetings:

Executive Committee	17-20 February 2004
Executive Committee	24-27 August 2004 (no Central Committee)
Executive Committee	18-19 February or 19-20 February 2005
Central Committee	21 February - 1 March 2005
Executive Committee	13-16 September 2005

18. CLOSING ACTIONS

The Moderator shared his concern that the Executive Committee and the churches project a positive image of WCC.

He expressed his thanks to the General Secretary for continuous support and commitment to the WCC and to the ecumenical cause in general. He thanked the staff colleagues who helped the Executive Committee in organising this meeting and carrying on our work together. He also said how happy the Committee was to meet in a renewed Bossey and thanked the Bossey staff and especially the Director, Dr Ioan Sauca. The Executive Committee members were also thanked for their active participation in the work of the Committee. He then declared this meeting of the Executive Committee closed.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Officers:	H.H. Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia	(Moderator)
	Mrs Justice Sophia Adinyira	(Vice-Moderator)
	Dr Marion Best	(Vice-Moderator)
	Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser	(General Secretary)
Members:	Bishop Dr Hilarion of Podolsk Alfeyev	
	Ms Donnalie E.C. Edwards-Cabey	
	Dean Anders Gadegaard	
	Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima	
	Mrs Carmencita Karagdag	
	H.G. Archbishop Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim	
	Rev. Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick	
	Bishop Dr Rolf Koppe	
	Rev. Septemmy E. Lakawa	
	Rev. Dr Maake S.J. Masango	
	H.G. Archbishop Nifon of Targoviste	
	Bishop McKinley Young	
	Rt. Rev. Dr Zacharias Mar Theophilus	
Apologies:	Rev. Yadessa Daba	
	Rev. Inamar Correa De Souza	
	Rev. Fr. Dr Kondothra M. George	
	Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky	
	Ms Jana Krajciriková	
	Prof. Dr Samuel Lee	
	Ms Abigail O. Ogunsanya	
	Rev. Dr Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere	
Substitutes:	Mr John Doom	
	Rev. Iteffa Gobena	
	Fr. Mikhail Gundyaev	
Staff:	Mr Jean-Nicolas Bazin	
	Ms Nan Braunschweiger	

Ms Elaine Dykes
Ms Salpy Eskidjian
Rev. Dr Alan Falconer
Dr Elizabeth Ferris
Ms Aruna Gnanadason
Rev. Dr Carlos Ham
Mr Michiel Hardon
Ms Geneviève Jacques
Mr Clement John
Rev. Dr Sam Kobia
Mr Georges Lemopoulos
Ms Christina Minezac
Mr Yannick Provost
Fr. Dr Ioan Sauca
Ms Sara Speicher
Dr William Temu
Rev. Sabine Udodesku
Mr Peter Weiderud

Minutes:	Ms Catherine Christ-Taha Ms Libby Visinand
Administration:	Ms Ursula Zierl

APPENDIX II

MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Programme

Dr Marion S. Best (Moderator)
Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima
H.G. Archbishop Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim
Rev. Septemmy E. Lakawa
Rev. Dr Maake J. Masango
Bishop Dr Zacharias Mar Theophilus

Staffing and Nominations

Mrs Justice Sophia O.A. Adinyira (Moderator)
Bishop Dr Hilarion of Podolsk Alfeyev
Mrs Donnalie Edwards-Cabey
Rev. Iteffa Gobena
Rev. Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick
Archbishop Nifon of Targoviste

Finance

His Holiness Aram I
Mr John Doom
Dean Anders Gadegaard
Mrs Carmencita Karagdag
Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky
Bischof Dr Rolf Koppe
Bishop McKinley Young (Moderator)

Public Issues

Archbishop Nifon
Bishop Dr Rolf Koppe
Rev. Septemmy Lakawa
H.G. Archbishop Karim

APPENDIX III

New Ways of Strengthening Relationships with Churches and Ecumenical Partners in the Regions: Implementation of the Common Understanding and Vision Policy Statement

Background

The Common Understanding and Vision process set out important guidelines for the way WCC structures its work.

The CUV asserts that the WCC is a living body that responds to challenges.

> 3.1.3 As a fellowship of churches and an instrument for strengthening the ecumenical movement, the World Council of Churches has an institutional profile. This profile has many components, including the work the Council does, the events it organizes, the statements it makes, the images it projects. But the WCC as an institution must not be paralyzed by *institutionalism*, for its vocation in the service of the churches and the ecumenical movement requires that it be a living organism, responding to new challenges brought by changing times, new ecumenical partners and growing discernment of the ecumenical calling.
>
> [3.14]Structures are the means by which the Council seeks at a given moment of its life to manifest effectively its reality as a fellowship of churches. They constitute the basic shape of the Council, the framework for particular working arrangements. Changes in this framework neither replace the insights nor deny the values of what has gone before, but rather reflect a continuing dialogue of understandings and visions.

The CUV policy statement affirms that the ecumenical movement is grounded in regional specificities which must be reflected in WCC structures and that the Council should find ways to adapt its working style to meet the challenges.

> [3.16]The internal structure of the WCC (…) should:
> - [3.16.2]aim at enhancing the fellowship among the member churches, not at building up or maintaining an organization for its own sake;
> - [3.16.3]acknowledge the plurality of cultures and theological and spiritual traditions represented in the member churches and manifest a commitment to being a truly inclusive community;

- [3.16.5]ensure that responsibility for ecumenical activities is lodged as near as is feasible to the point of application, in partnership with groups of member churches and other ecumenical organizations;
- [3.16.6] enable the Council to adapt its work and working style as necessary to meet the rapidly changing conditions of the world and the diverse needs of the churches in a focused, effective and economically sustainable manner;
- [3.16.7]provide for regular planning, review and assessment of all activities.

In keeping with the spirit of the CUV process, the WCC has been exploring for some time new ways of strengthening relationships with churches through new methodologies. The relocation of some areas of work has already been successfully experienced in some regions.

In the light of the present financial situation, the Council has been compelled to move beyond the exploratory stage and to consider new options to implement its core mandate in the most cost-effective ways.

Among the options proposed by the Task Group and accepted by the expanded Officers' meeting of 14-15 November 2002, were the relocation of the work of the Pacific and the Middle East desks of the Diakonia and Solidarity Team to the respective regions.

The WCC has previous experience in locating programmes and offices outside of Geneva, for example, through its US and Eastern European offices. It should be noted as well that the Officers also agreed to a significant reduction in the staff of the US office, and the Eastern European office has undergone a review of its strategies and directions. While the conditions that have led to the creation of these two de-centralised offices and the ways of working of these offices are very different, the experience has proved that de-centralised offices can enable the Council to relate effectively to the churches and ecumenical partners in these regions. The decision taken by the Officers seeks therefore to build on these experiences in relocating two regional desks to the regions.

The financial pressure has added to the need to move in that direction rapidly, i.e. within a six-month period as from December 2002. The financial pressures were such that it was not possible to consult with the churches and other partners in the regions before the decision was taken. This means that WCC will need to work closely with churches in explaining and implementing this decision.

Rationale behind the choice of these two regions

The regional desks have the historical mandate to accompany, facilitate and strengthen the diaconal ministries of the churches in the regions through capacity-building in particular, and to enable and strengthen ecumenical and multilateral cooperation and solidarity on diakonia and development between churches, church-related organizations of the region and international ecumenical partners.

The role of the team and of its regional desks has both a relational aspect with the churches and the regional and national ecumenical organizations and a programmatic aspect related to the different social ministries of the churches.

A specific responsibility of the regional desks is to keep alive the link between the local and the global ecumenical realities, by bringing the needs, concerns and inputs of the local churches to the global level and by promoting the global perspectives of the world ecumenical fellowship in the local realities.

In terms of the objectives of the "relocated" regional offices in the Pacific and the Middle East, priority will be given to the diaconal dimension as a specific core mandate of the Council entrusted to the Diakonia and Solidarity Team. At the same time, the offices will play important roles in strengthening relationships with the churches.

Recognizing that all regional realities are different and therefore that the concrete responses provided to the needs of the churches must be contextual, the choice of the Pacific and the Middle East has been guided by two inter-related concerns:

- To provide a closer accompaniment and monitoring of the diaconal work of the churches and to enable a more responsive, flexible and effective response to the churches' needs, especially in critical and changing situations, by reducing distances (both geographical and psychological).

- To reduce WCC's operating costs by making the most cost-effective use of the funds allocated to the Council for its work in the regions (in particular in terms of salaries and infrastructure costs).

For the **Pacific**, the major problem of the present location of the regional desk in Geneva is the distance, both between Geneva and the Pacific region and within the region itself.

In setting up an office at the core of this huge geographical region, the Council will be better located to provide the kind of support and accompaniment required and expected by the churches, and to facilitate relations between the national and regional ecumenical organizations and the international ecumenical movement. While the office will have responsibilities to support diaconal initiatives, it will also represent the WCC in the region and is intended to serve as an "entry point" for churches wishing to relate to the Council as a whole.

Strong and regular links will be maintained with the WCC in Geneva so as to avoid the isolation of the regional office from the collective reflection and initiatives undertaken by the programme teams and to ensure that the reality and the life of the Pacific ecumenical movement remain at the centre of WCC's concerns. Over the last decade, the Pacific desk in the WCC has led to a greater awareness of Pacific concerns within the Council and has brought back a sense of ownership of the WCC by the Pacific churches. Care will be taken to ensure that these achievements are maintained in relocating the office to the region.

For the **Middle East** the challenges to be addressed by the WCC are of a different nature: they concern mainly the Christian presence and witness in the Middle East at a time when the political situation and the conflicts in the region are putting new and pressing strains on the churches' witness in the Middle East.

In this context, two important positions need to be addressed: How best can WCC listen and be responsive to the evolving needs of the churches? And more precisely, how best can the Council strengthen the diaconal ministries of the churches?

In relocating the Middle East desk closer to the daily reality of the difficult and complex issues encountered by the churches and Christian communities in their social and humanitarian work, the WCC seeks to strengthen efforts to:

- Facilitate the ecumenical support of the international ecumenical family in a more timely and coordinated manner.

- Provide greater opportunity for the churches and church-related organizations to be more actively involved in the planning and implementation of diaconal work in the region.

- Reinforce the witness of the churches in the region in a more coherent way by fostering the diaconal dimension in complement to wider ecumenical work for

advocacy and peace developed by WCC in Palestine/Israel (EAPPI - Jerusalem Ecumenical Centre) and in complement to MECC's activities.

In relocating the office to the region, particular care will be taken to coordinate its diaconal work with other WCC, MECC and ACT initiatives. The focus of the Middle East regional office will be on diakonia rather than representation. The question of broader relationships between the churches of the Middle East and the World Council of Churches will continue to be addressed by the Deputy General Secretary and the office of Church and Ecumenical Relations within the WCC General Secretariat.

WCC's Commitment

WCC will take all necessary steps to ensure that the two offices are enabled to function effectively and that the necessary consultations with member churches and regional ecumenical organizations take place. Funds for programmatic activities in the two regions will continue unaffected by the relocation (though like all regional diaconal work, there have been reductions as a result of the Council's financial difficulties.) Serious efforts must be made to ensure that the relocated offices participate fully in the life of the Council.

The offices are expected to begin functioning by July 2003. The offices will be in regular contact with WCC, and will report to the team coordinator of the Diakonia and Solidarity Team.

A review of the two relocated regional offices will be carried out after one year (July 2004) with the full participation of the regional ecumenical organizations and churches in the regions concerned.